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THE
REVELATIONS OF AN
ORDERLY,

BEING

AN ATTEMPT TO EXPOSE THE ABUSES OF ADMINISTRATION
BY THE RELATION OF EVERY-DAY OCCURRENCES
IN THE MOFUSSIL COURTS.

BY

PANCHKOUREE KHAN.

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P R E F A C E .

The following pages were originally written for and published in the "*Benares Recorder*." The object of the writer was to state in simple language, facts that had come under his own observation ; and to expose abuses in the subordinate administration of the Courts, that are universally acknowledged to exist. A varied experience of twenty-one years in different departments of the government service, had given him some insight into the native character ; and he was desirous of shewing the public in general and young officials in particular, the several modes that the natives have of "*throwing dust*" in the eyes of their European superiors.

The writer was also desirous of pointing out to the authorities a few of the weak points of the system of Policy and Revenue. He could not presume to do this in his own person ; and he made use of the fictitious agency of "*an Orderly*," to relate his own varied experience.

The writer of these pages once for all, begs leave to state, that nothing tending to the personal disparagement of any individual, was intended. He earnestly hopes that no offence has been taken at any of his remarks ; and he throws himself upon the indulgence of the public, in once more intruding on their notice.

PREFACE

The following pages were originally written for and published in the "British Review". The object of the writer was to state in simple language, those facts which were his own observation, and to express ideas in the most ordinary and unobtrusive manner, that a reasonably well-informed and impartial public might be enabled to judge for itself. A varied experience of twenty-one years in different departments of the government service, had given him some insight into the native character; and he was desirous of showing the public in general, and young officials in particular, the several modes in which the natives have of "improvement" in the eyes of their European superiors. The writer was also desirous of pointing out to the authorities a few of the weak points of the system of policy and management. He could not refrain to do this in his own person; and he made use of the familiar phrase of "an old man" to refer to his own varied experience. The writer of these pages must for all days leave to state that feeling leading to the present disagreement of any individual, was intended. He generally hopes that no offence has been taken at any of his remarks; and he trusts that the impartiality of the public is not more interested in these matters.

REVELATIONS OF AN ORDERLY.

REVELATIONS RESPECTING THE POLICE, MAGISTRACY, & CRIMINAL COURTS.

CHAP. I.

SUNTOKHEA SINGH EXPLAINS TO PANCHKOUREE THE CAUSES OF HIS PROSPERITY.

Some three years ago my friend Suntokhea was a poor devil of an Oomedwar ;* and having a friend at the back-stairs he succeeded in being appointed an orderly of the Huzoor Magistrate Bahadoor. Having returned to my home, after a fruitless wandering in search of employment, I thought of my quondam friend and townsman, and proceeded to visit him at once. When I saw him I could scarcely credit my eyes ; instead of the squalid mud-hut, roofed with coarse reeds, there had arisen a comely brick mansion ; and instead of my friend Suntokhea being haggard and hungry-looking, I saw a respectable, sleek-bearded, Musulman-looking stranger ; bearing indeed a sort of resemblance to my old acquaintance, but at the same time with such an air of grandeur that I was afraid to address him. Involuntarily I joined my hands and salamed. But no notice was vouchsafed me. Until happening to enquire whether my friend Suntokhea were in existence, one of the party told me that *Suntokhea-Singh*† was, indeed, before me. Apologizing for my inadvertent rudeness, I tried to make myself obsequiously agreeable ; and every body having left, my friend at length deigned to notice me and to enquire as to my adventures.

I satisfied my friend's curiosity, and taking advantage of his complaisant mood, I begged of him to enlighten me as to the ways and means by which he, once a poor *Koonbee*,‡ had acquired so much substance ? He communicated as follows :—

What a silly fool you must be my friend, to suppose I could have *saved* aught from my pay. As an orderly, I receive four rupees a month. I am expected to be smartly dressed, and to be in constant attendance on the Huzoor ; I must have something to eat during the day, and I cannot come home to my wife for my day meals. How then can I keep myself in decent clothing, and feed myself, wife and children, on four rupees a month ?

* Expectant. † The usual affix to a Rajpoot's name. Sing means a lion.

‡ A cultivator of a caste famous for its industry.

To this I replied, that I was only the more puzzled to find out the secret of his system. That he could do nothing for any suitor for justice; nor could he bar access to the Huzoor.* How then could one make money?

My sapient friend, said Suntokhea, I was not aware that you were so green. We have scores of ways of making money, even when our masters are vigilant and cautious, and vainly imagine that because, forsooth, they take the trouble to do the work themselves, no person will give fees. I will describe some few of the processes by which we receive money.

A great man's Mooktyar or Karindah† is sent by his master to wait on the Huzoor. He is admitted into the entrance hall, where he remains unnoticed for a couple of hours. To all his prayers, to give intimation to the Huzoor of his presence, a deaf ear is turned. Until fairly exhausted, the Karindah offers me a rupee. This is spurned, and I ask him whether he thinks I *could* possibly take *one* rupee? The poor man, driven to desperation, offers me five rupees. On this I pocket the affront, put on my sweetest smile; declare that he is a perfect *ushraf*,‡ and intimate to my master, that such a one craves an interview. Five rupees you will say is but a small morsel. I allow it; but then these delicate bits come frequently.

Again, every rich native gentleman, who is in the habit of visiting the "*Saheban Aleeshan*,"§ fees us orderlies on every festival. Suppose my gentleman becomes a non-conformist to our rules, or is in any way inclined to be bumptious, he finds that in the next visit he pays the Huzoor, his suwaree|| remains unnoticed in the compound; or if he enters the entrance room, no one will so much as give him a chair to sit upon. If he becomes impatient, we recommend his going away as the Huzoor is busy, and has positively prohibited intrusion. My gentleman finds himself at a non-plus; and is glad to compromise by paying us *all* double fees, and giving a solemn promise of good behaviour for the future.

But, said I, *Suntokhea Singh*, suppose one of these gents were to inform the Huzoor of your tricks, how would you get out of the scrape?

Why, replied he, nothing is easier. No man will dare to inform against his having given fees to the servants of the Huzoor, because he would criminate himself. He can merely complain of useless detention. On this the Huzoor wigs us and desires us, under pain of his displeasure, not to keep people waiting at his door, without at once apprising him. Well, the next people that call, are at once ushered into the presence, whether the Huzoor be busy or not. His patience becomes exhausted, and he scolds again for indiscriminate admission. To this we reply most submissively, that we had the Huzoor's own orders. He despairs of managing us, and we have our own way.

* Literally, the presence. † Attorney or representative, or agent.

‡ Gentleman. § Gentlemen of exalted dignity, applied, par excellence, to the dignitaries of the British Government. || Carriage.

Again, suppose a thanadar does not purchase our favor; nothing is easier than getting him turned out. Of course we dare not meddle directly; but we watch our opportunity, and when we find the Saheb idle, we talk in stage-whispers, and invent some scandal or lie against the thanadar, which one tells to another by way of news. A second states, that he also has heard such a story of the thanadar, and mentions it. A third says, that the thanadar is a *nimukharam*;* for he abuses the Magistrate Saheb Bahadoor; and says, he does not care for him, so long as he does his duty. These whispers are overheard and operate like slow poison, and on the occasion of the first irregularity occurring, our stories are (perhaps unconsciously) remembered against the unfortunate thanadar and he is suspended, *sine die*—which is in fact a dismissal.

I took leave of friend Suntokhea in admiration of his inventive talents, fully resolved to fee him for his interest in getting a berth as a Burra Saheb's orderly myself, when, should I succeed, I may be able to withdraw the curtain which hides other mysteries.

CHAP. II.

HOW THE MOONSHEE JEE SCHOOLS PANCHKOUREE

AS TO THE MODE OF PROCEEDING.

I promised to pay my quondam friend and present patron two months' pay, on obtaining a chupprass† and before long I was recommended to the "Dipty Saheb," whose orderly I, in due course, became. I consoled myself with the reflection that ere long I should get some small pickings, which would amount in the aggregate to something comfortable. But several weeks passed, and I found I could pocket nothing; for none but petty matters were tried by my master. In despair I consulted Suntokhea once more.

What a simpleton you are, friend Panchkouree, to be in a fix about such a trifle. The Deputy Saheb has the "Surasurree"‡ department. Where two parties contest a case, one must lose. The gainer, as an established *dustoor*,§ pays for the decision in his favor. It is an undoubted prerogative of the Huzoor's orderly to receive a fee, as also that of the Mohurir.|| Thus a double object is gained. You will get a daily fee of at least 4 or 8 annas; and by and bye become the agent between the *decree-dar*¶ and the Mohurir; you will have the latter under your thumb, and can compel him to improve your prospects. But, said I, the Saheb is said to be sharp; should he discover my inter-

* Unfaithful to salt, an ingrate.

† A badge.

‡ Summary Department for decision of cases between landlord and tenant.

§ Custom. || Writer or Clerk.

¶ Decree holder.

ference, he will punish me ; on what pretext then shall I demand a fee from the *decreedar*.

Friend Panchkouree, replied Suntokhea, believe me that your Saheb is as blind a mole as the rest of them. How is he to discover anything ? The *decreedars*, for their own sake, will not tell tales ; and one leaves the presence on so many occasions, that so long as somebody is within hail, the absence for a few minutes, of an orderly, is unnoticed. Ask boldly ; I am confident of the result ; and do you not fail to give me part of your earnings.

Well, next day, as soon as a case was decided, I quietly sneaked out of the room ; and following the *decreedar*, significantly held out my palm. To my joy and surprise he slipped a rupee into it, and whispered me to give the Moonshee his share. I thought that bad luck would come of a division of such spoils, so I uttered an *alhumduloollah ! !** and stroking my beard entered the presence with increased gravity. The same experiment was repeatedly tried with varied success as to the amount : in no case was I utterly disappointed.

After a few days the Moonshee called me to his house, and asked me whether I had made any money ? I called the Prophet to witness that nobody thought of offering me a cowree. Friend, he said, have I not seen thee follow out the *decreedars* ; surely it was not without a purpose, and without some result ? So help me Allah, Moonshee Saheb, I answered, that I received nothing but scurrilous abuse. Who am I that a zumeendar should pay me aught ? The Moonshee, at length, told me that it was established as an ancient rule, that whosoever gained a cause should give a *douceur* to the Umlah. That in future I should demand fees in the Moonshee Jee's name ; and that I should retain one-fourth for myself and fellow chupprasees, and give him three-fourths, for himself and his friends. This I readily agreed to, and then the Moonshee Jee schooled me how I was to behave on certain occasions which I proceed to describe.

Suppose an order is passed, calling for a *kyfeut*† from the Sheristah ;‡ nobody ever thinks of executing the order before the lapse of a week at least. If the plaintiff be importunate, and the saheb desire you to ascertain why the *kyfeut* has not been written, you take the complainant out with you, and ask him what he will give if you get the *kyfeut* written at once ? The poor wretch, tired of waiting for days, gladly offers a rupee. You pocket it ; go to the Muhafiz-duftur,§ and say that the Saheb has sent word, that if the order is not at once executed he will be fined roundly. The matter is ended at once, and we divide the spoil. If the party will not pay, you go and enquire why the *kyfeut* is not written ? The answer is, that some important papers are called for by a superior authority ; and the Muhafiz-duftur begs that the Huzoor will give him a few days' grace. The harrassed litigant finds it cheaper to pay a rupee than to be

* Thanksgiving, praise to God.

† The native Record-keeper.

‡ Memorandum of report.

§ Record-keeper.

kept cooling his heels at the court for weeks, and gives in at last, paying his fees with interest.

Again, it is the established practice for a zumeendar to pay a fee of one rupee for every jumwabundee* that is filed in the office. This is taken by the Muhafiz-duftur and Qanoongoes.† But, friend Panchkouree, it is cruelly hard that you and I should not partake of the spoil. So look sharp ; and whenever you hear a zumeendar complain to the Huzoor that his jumwabundee, although given in, has not been filed, try and make a bargain : go and bully the Qanoongo and Muhafiz-duftur, as if with the Saheb's *hookoom*.‡ The zumeendar will fee you, and we will divide like good friends.

Various hints did I receive and act upon ; and I need not say that I not only made lots of money, but generally contrived to keep the lion's share of the prey to myself. I was not satisfied, however, with such small game ; and was resolved on the first opportunity to change my service, for one of greater emolument and higher station.

CHAP. III.

HOW PANCHKOUREE MAKES MONEY, WHILE A SHERIFF'S OFFICER, OR PROCESS SERVER.

Having solved the golden problem, and being fixed in my purpose to build a pukka house and to possess some landed property, I took the earliest opportunity of taking my congé, of the Dipty Saheb, and being transferred to the staff of the Nazir.§ Now this official is the chief executive, and his chuprasees share in the prestige of his name, as well as in the emoluments of his office. Being a stranger, I of course, had the fag, without any of the profits. But I was becoming quite a man of the world and a practical philosopher, so I consoled myself with the reflection, that when my *kismut*|| ordained it I should be as great a man as my friend Suntokhea Singh. Most diligently did I do the Nazir Saheb's bidding. Most assiduous was I in filling his chillum ; bringing him water ; running after his palkee or garee, until I fairly won his confidence, and was looked upon by all persons as his especial favorite.

I found that a deal of money was to be made and by the simplest process in the world. The Dipty Saheb issued a summons for the appearance of a petty defaulter of revenue. The "*tullubana*¶" is paid by the plaintiff but if he does not make a "*moamlah***" with us, the process is never served. Several of these writs are entrusted to one man ; but the majority of

* Rent-roll.

† Fiscal officers.

‡ Order.

§ Sheriff.

|| Fate.

¶ Money for serving a process.

** Compromise.

them are never out of the *kummurbund** of the chuprasee. When the period allowed for serving them has elapsed, a *kyfeut* is given in to the effect, that "the plaintiff would not indicate the party named, and that, therefore, the serving of the process was impossible." Perhaps the plaintiff protests that no chuprasee ever went to the village. The Nazir is summoned. On being spoken to, he sends for me, and sharply asks whether the summons was served or not? I call the prophet to witness that the plaintiff's allegation is a lie; that I did go for three several days, but that the plaintiff would not indicate the defendant. Upon this, the Saheb issues a warrant of apprehension, which is entrusted to me to execute, and the plaintiff not only pays the *tullubana* a second time, but pays the piper, by feeing me roundly to apprehend the defaulter. But I shall relate another process of making money and deceiving the Collector or Deputy. Bulbhuddur Singh is purchaser of the rights and interests of Duldhuuput Misr in the village of Undhadhoond; but what these rights *may* be, I do not pretend to know. He gets a deed of possession from the Civil Court and proceeds to the village to collect his rents. He finds that Duldhuuput is one of the small fry of proprietary brotherhood that has no direct concern in the management of the village. He examines the Putwaree's papers, and is puzzled to know what he has purchased. Most men would content themselves with chewing the cud of resignation; but Baboo Bulbhuddur Singh is a man of another stamp; and he resolves on playing the artful dodger; and picks out a couple of needy asamees† who are not scrupulous as to truth. He offers to pay them five rupees each, if they will but appear before the Collector Saheb, and acknowledge that they are cultivators of Mouza Undhadhoond, and that Baboo Bulbhuddur is *the* zemindar, and entitled to receive the revenue. What is the man driving at? you enquire. Have patience and you will see.

Baboo Bulbhuddur presents a petition in the '*Surasurree*' department, praying that Ramdeennoo Chumar and Durshunoo Ahir be coerced to pay him two rupees each for five biswas of land, cultivated by each in the village of Undhadhoond. A *kyfeut* is called for from the office, as to whether Baboo Bulbhuddur be zemindar? The return is that 'he is auction purchaser, and that his name is recorded in lieu of Duldhuuput Misr.' A process is served against the defaulters Ramdeennoo and Durshunoo; who having been paid, and schooled beforehand, appear before the Huzoor and acknowledge the justness of the claim, and agree to pay, if a little grace be vouchsafed. This is called '*ekbaldawee*'‡ and decree for the plaintiff is ordered.

Some weeks afterwards, Baboo Bulbhuddur Singh proceeds to the village of Undhadhoond to collect his rents. The zemindars turn out and oppose him, and, perhaps, a serious affray is the result. The Baboo now complains in the Fouzdaree Adalat for forcible dispossession, under the provisions of Act 4 of 1840, or

* Waist-band.

† Villagers.

‡ Admission.

as it is commonly known '*Akut Chaharoom*.' He refers to the case decided by the '*Dipty Saheb*,' in which he obtained decree for rent : he shews the order of the Civil Court for putting him in possession. He cites Ramdeenooa and Durshunooa as witnesses to his possession. He summons me to prove that when I served the process against the asamees, I observed that he was in possession of Mouza Undhadhoond. And as he pays well, and we have all sworn through thick and thin, the odds are that Bulbhuddur Singh is 'ordered to be put in possession of the property disputed.' Upon the strength of which he manages, gradually, to get the entire estate.

One day the Nazir was directed to oust a cultivator, who had a large *jote** in the village of *Undhadhoond* ; and previous to deputing me, he took me aside and schooled me how I should act. I made fifty rupees by this one job, and shall describe the whole of the proceedings. If a landlord obtain a decree for rent against an asamee, he may pray for a process of ouster, any time within twelve years. The asamee is summoned. I am feed for *not* serving process, and return the order with a *kyfeut* that the defendant will not come out of his house—is in short '*rooposh*.'† The unfortunate cultivator is ordered to be dispossessed of his fields for his contumacy. I go out with a force of peons and uproot everything already grown by the cultivator ; and aid the landlord in re-ploughing the fields.

Should the landlord imagine that he can carry out the Collector Saheb's order without giving us fees ; it gives us no concern. We make a bargain with the other party, and if the worst comes to the worst on going out to put the landlord in possession, we, instead of doing so, pretend scruples of conscience as to uprooting crops about to ripen—and report to the Saheb, in a well-got-up *kyfeut*, that the *decreedar* is a '*zalim*'‡ and a '*moofsidh*'§—that Bulbhuddur Singh's reputation is so well-known to the Huzoor, that it does not need for the slave to represent, &c. &c., and the asamee keeps possession of his field.

CHAP. IV.

HOW PAUNCHKOURÉE GETS ON TO THE PAY LIST OF A WEALTHY NATIVE.

I was directed by the Nazir, one day, to apprehend a revenue defaulter, or to bring his principal Karindah before the Huzoor. The defaulter was a Nawabzadeh, and the apprehension of even his steward would be looked upon as a disgrace. However the Collector Saheb Bahadoor passed the order to the Nazir, and it was my province to obey orders. I proceeded at once to the Nawab Saheb's house, with two other chuprasees, and present-

* Tillage.

† In hiding.

‡ Tyrant.

§ Rascal.

ing the warrant, desired them to accompany us to the Nazir. We had a broad hint to quit, for the warrant was thrown back to us, and a cry of "*mar, mar*"* raised, that induced us to bolt in double-quick time. Next day a formidable *kyfeut* was given in to the Huzoor. I had heard that the Karindah was wont to come daily to the Kacherree to consult the Sheristadar. I was on the look out, and the moment he appeared I ran and informed the Huzoor, who at once ordered his apprehension. He was in quod for three days ; and his master soon paid the amount due by him for his man's release. This was a grand moral lesson for the Nawab Saheb ; and the next time he took care not to insult people in power. But when I went to make my salam I was gratified with a fee and promises for the future.

A fruitful field is the abkaree system, and the license granted to opium and drug farmers to oppress the people, and screw money out of them. I say license given, because they make use of their farming license to be guilty of all kinds of villany. I was directed one day to execute a search warrant for contraband opium. The *theekadar*† sent for me, made much of me, and put five rupees into my hand. I asked no questions, but knew very well that I was expected to do something for my fee. Several of the farmer's people accompanied me to the house to be searched. I authoritatively called out to the owner of the house to admit me to search for contraband opium. The man was a wealthy Bunneah ; and appearing to be conscious of his innocence, at once opened the door and admitted us. I saw one of the farmer's men quietly deposit a bundle of something under some rubbish, and after rummaging about he ferreted out his own bundle, which he held up in triumph to us as *the* contraband opium we had been desired to search for. The poor Bunneah was horror-stricken, and appealed to me ; but having received a retainer I dared not to defend the poor man. I swore he was a liar ; called out to the witnesses, before whom the opium was taken out of the Bunneah's house, to remember what they had seen and to depone to that effect before the Huzoor. The Bunneah in desperation offered me fifty rupees to release him. But as I could not do so, after having proceeded so far, I abused him and calling all persons to witness that he had offered a bribe ; bundled him off to the Saheb Bahadur. He was fined 100 rupees, of which one-fourth was carried to the account of Government ; one half was given to the farmer's people, and the remaining fourth was bestowed on me.

I thought this plan of making money was an admirable one ; but was resolved to try whether more money could be made by siding against the theekadar instead of with him. I had not long to wait, when an order was passed by the Dipty Saheb to search the house of a well-known courtesan. The theekadar sent for me ; but I would not go ; and during the night I paid a visit to *Madame Dulfureb*,‡ she received me haughtily ; but I

* Beat.

† Farmer.

‡ Proper name—Enticer of the heart.

soon convinced her of my power to molest or protect her; and I was not only treated to "every delicacy of the season," but to her blindest smiles. I ascertained that she had a quantity of opium in the house, which her servants made up into *mudduck*, or little pellets for smoking. This we carefully hid; and next morning I accompanied the theekadar's men to the house of *Madame Dildureb*. I insisted upon the people being searched in the presence of a police burkundaz previous to entering the lady's house. One fellow had a large bundle of *kuffa*,* which was boned by the police and the search proceeded; of course nothing was found. I duly reported the delinquency of the theekadar's people, who were roundly fined, and I not only received a handsome fee from *Dildureb*, but additional marks of respect and esteem.

The farmers of the abkaree make large profits, not by the sale of drugs, but by holding a threat of searching honest people's houses in *terrorem* over them; they seize contraband articles, extort money from the contrabandists, who are too glad to compromise with them, rather than be sent up to the Collector Sahab, and the farmer is glad to let them off for what he can screw out of them, because he gets the *whole*, and has neither the onus nor trouble of furnishing proof of the guilt of the parties. It is *only* in cases of public seizure when the farmer dares not suppress the case, that rich contrabandists are sent up for punishment, or where the parties are too poor to be squeezed; and the farmer's interest requires him to cram the maw of the penal law with a few victims.

CHAP. V.

ZUBBURDUST MISR AND LALLA RAMBALUK; AND HOW THEY ROSE BY ACCUSING THE INNOCENT, WHEN THEY COULD NOT FIND THE GUILTY PERSONS.

I had become acquainted with every "*Jack in office*," and as we had many little "*soirées*" of our own, and in a friendly manner compared notes with one another, I was at once able to perceive that amongst us flunkies I was a very little creature indeed. That my friend Suntokhea was but a gudgeon, while others might not inaptly be called the sharks and alligators of our legal sea. My eyes glistened at the objects in prospect, and my whole frame quivered with emotion, as I listened to my friends, when they related the ways and means *they* had of making money. Every man of them had one pukka house or more. Ranges of shops in the bazars they had contrived to convert into their own property, and in their mohullas,† they were "cocks of the walk," and who dared compete with them when they chose to cock-a-doodle-doo? I shall proceed to give some of their histories.

* Rags steeped in poppy milk, and twisted tightly together.

† Wards.

Zubburdust Misr was a strong, black, middle aged man, with an "oily-gammonish" kind of look about him that deceived every body. He was a burkundaz on the receipt of 4 Rs. per mensem, and had been on the staff of the well-known thief catcher, Lalla Rambaluk, thanadar of Zalingunje, district of Beinsafpoor. A set of miscreants, whom nobody could trace, were going about the country poisoning and robbing the lieges. Parties used to be found lying dead, or dying near wells, or in the suraees, stripped of everything, and without any marks of violence. The Civil Surgeon, on making a post-mortem examination, could only affirm that they had been poisoned, he presumed with *dhutoora*. The men "died, and their corpses presented no outward signs of violence." The greatest consternation prevailed. The Magistrate reported the circumstance to Government, and got a wiggling for his pains; and he in consequence issued an order to "stop the pay of all the thanadars" until the delinquents were discovered. Upon this Rambaluk was sent for, and directed to produce the poisoners, under penalty of the Huzoor's severe displeasure. Everything that man could do was done, but we could make nothing of the case; so like Lord Burleigh we solemnly shook our heads and pronounced the affair a mystery!

Again, it was reported that four travellers had been poisoned and robbed. Two died, but two recovered after a deal of trouble. The survivors deposed that they had made a long march, and about noon-day having come to a shady peepul tree on the roadside, close by which there was a well of sweet water, they sat down to refresh themselves. They had nothing to eat but a little "*chubenah*,"* which humble fare appearing to excite the compassion of a party of travellers, who were also seated under the peepul, they offered them some "*suttoo*,"† which having eaten, they suddenly became insensible. They stated that sundry articles of silver, such as bangles, armlets, &c., were in their bundles; the whole of which had been taken by the poisoners.

Again the most thundering orders were fulminated to the police. The Kotwal and all the thanadars were sent out to hunt for the poisoners; but nobody could give any information as to their whereabouts. At last Rambaluk sent for me. Brother Zubburdust Misr, said he, you know that Bhowanee Pershad Sahoo is a notorious *thangeedar*, (receiver of stolen property) and that of late he has not given us any but the smallest fees. Go at once to his house, search it, and produce the silver articles, according to the Huzoor's orders. I at once twigged his meaning; but wishing to gammon him, I insinuated—'but Lallah Shaheb, the Sahoo must have in his *dokan*‡ scores of bangles and armlets, how am I to know which are the ones that the poisoned travellers owned?' To this Rambaluk replied—you and I should understand one another by this time Zubburdust Misr. Ask no silly questions, but go and produce the articles from Bhowanee Pershad's house, and there will be no difficulty in iden-

* Parched peas.

† Parched peas and barley ground into meal.

‡ Shop.

tifying them. I went as directed; and producing my warrant, proceeded to business. The Sahoo asked me if I were mad to be searching the house of an old friend? He denied having any of the stolen property; and talked very much about his "*izzut*."* Friend Sahoo, I enquired, how will you account for having such a variety of silver and golden ornaments as yonder chest contains. (Here I pointed towards an old acquaintance, which was carefully concealed). He understood me and offered me a hundred rupees, which I at once pocketed. I was afraid, however, to return to Lallah Rambaluk without *any* silver ornaments; so I took from the Sahoo sundry bits of silver that *had* been bangles and armlets—and after *sumjhaoing*† him, asked him in the presence of witnesses, whence he had procured them? He replied that a woman called Lutchminea, by caste a Brahminee, had sold them to him two days previously; I took Bhowanee Pershad and the bits of silver to Lallah Rambaluk, who, after cogitating for a few moments, uttered a devout "*Sree—Sree—Sree*," and looking at me triumphantly, exclaimed that the whole plot was unravelled, and in two days our faces should be made white before the Huzoor. The Sahoo paid the thanadar another 50 rupees, and was released on bail.

We then apprehended Lutchminea, and asked her to confess. But she persisted in denying all knowledge of the bits of silver or of the gang of poisoners. Give her a remembrancer, Zubburdust Misr, said Rambaluk. I took a large loose bag, containing decayed and dried chillies, and put it over her head, with a few shakes. In a few moments she was nearly suffocated, and when she recovered her senses she said she would confess to whatever we bid her. Her confession was taken in the thanna before three witnesses, and according to her statement we proceeded to seize Debee Misr, and Singha Ram. Both these worthies denied the charge; but they were old offenders and required a little *sumjhaoing*.‡ They were kept out exposed to the fierce rays of a vertical sun for a couple of hours, and when fainting from heat and thirst, they were treated to the chilly bag. They readily confessed before witnesses. Now here was a beautiful case for the Magistrate. The surviving travellers had sworn to having received *suttoo* from a party consisting of a woman and two men, who called themselves Bramins. Two men and a woman had confessed to the crimes of poisoning and robbing. The bits of silver they alleged to be part of the property robbed from the travellers. What booted it, that the travellers could not identify the robbers or the bits of silver? They had barely seen the robbers for a moment, and the bangles, &c., had been broken up. But the robbers freely confessed, and all was right.

The Huzoor was delighted at our success. Promised great things to Rambaluk Lallah, and made me a Jumedar of police

* Respectability.

† Tutoring.

‡ Here used for punishing.

at once. The defendants confessed before the Magistrate. They had been imprisoned previously for mal-practices ; and they were sent for trial by the Sessions Judge. The Sahoo got off on the pretext that he was ignorant of the silver having been stolen property ; and stated that he had voluntarily given it up to me ; and named Lutchminea as the party from whom he had purchased it. Here Zubburdust Misr paused to enjoy my astonishment.

Friend, I said, what you have just related gives me the highest respect for your abilities. But surely the Sahebs are not gulled so readily ! I also have played a few tricks, but had no notion of such wholesale consummate art as you mention. How were the alleged poisoners punished by the Judge Saheb ?

Zubburdust Misr sighed deeply, or affected to do so, and continued thus :—I had disbelieved that “ Ram Jee”^{*} interfered directly in the matters of this world ; but the issue of the case I have related gave me serious matter for reflection. You shall judge for yourself. Two days remained for the trial of the poisoners before the Junab Saheb Judge,[†] when a *roobakaree*[‡] was received by the Magistrate from the officiating Joint Magistrate of a neighbouring district (a young, headstrong, opiniative boy, one that *would* do everything himself, and not trust to his *Omlah*. One can never depend upon *what* they do) purporting that a gang of poisoners, consisting of two men and a woman had been taken by the police just as they were rifling some travellers to whom they had administered *dhutoora*. That they had a very miscellaneous collection of all kinds of silver and golden ornaments ; and that finding denial of no avail, as they had been caught in the act of robbing, they had confessed to having poisoned and robbed sundry people at different times, and that they had heard some innocent persons had been apprehended, and were committed for trial by the Sessions Judge, in the zillah of Beinsafpoor. They pointed out the property taken from the travellers, which, together with copy of their confession, was sent to the Magistrate of Beinsafpoor.

Here was a go ! The Saheb Magistrate raved and swore at the whole of the police. The men and woman who had confessed, were asked why they had confessed ? and out came the whole story. This would have gone for nothing, but the travellers swore to the identity of the property sent by the boy Joint, and there could be no doubt as to the innocence of the parties we had apprehended. The upshot was, that the Kotwal, Lalla Rambaluk, and two other thanadars, were turned out, and I was reduced to a burkundaz, in which place I have continued ever since.

I was determined to ascertain some more interesting matters, but the “soiree” broke up, and I proceeded to my home.

God.

[†] My Lord, the Judge.[‡] Proceeding.

CHAP. VI.

A THANADAR PUNISHED FOR AN HONEST REPORT.

I happened to be in the room, one day, when a fine-looking young fellow, in the undress of a sepoy, came up to the desk of the Joint Magistrate, and salamed to him. The Saheb Joint asked him what he wanted? He stated that his name was *Lootcha Singh*, that he was alleged to have been murdered three years back; and that as he understood his uncle had been transported to another district, on account of the alleged murder as a felon for life, he had come to exculpate him. The Saheb was not a little astonished; but he is one of those energetic men who never hesitates over a resolution, but at once carries it out. He sent for the *misl** of the case, and I heard read as follows:—

“*Gudha Purshad*, thanadar of *Bewuqoofpoor*, reported to the Magistrate, that *Lootcha Singh*, a resident of *Fussadgunj*, was missing. That nobody could give any account of him. That he had a criminal intrigue with his own brother's wife. That this brother was absent, but the intrigue having come to the knowledge of *Lootcha Singh's* uncle, *Zalim Singh*, it was suspected that *Lootcha Singh* had fled, nobody knew whither. Upon this, the Magistrate suspended *Gudha Purshad*, thanadar, recorded his conviction that *Lootcha Singh* had been murdered by his own relations, in revenge for the intrigue with his brother's wife. That the thanadar of *Bewuqoofpoor* had been bribed to send up a false statement of the case. That the Kotwal of the city be directed to go at once to the village of *Fussadgunj*; and within a fortnight to produce the murderers of *Lootcha Singh* with the necessary proofs, under penalty of dismissal.

“Within the fortnight the Kotwal reported to the Magistrate that, “*baikbul Huzoor*,”† he had apprehended the murderer of *Lootcha Singh*, who proved to be his uncle, *Zalim Singh*; and that the murderer not only confessed his crime, but that strong circumstantial evidence went to criminate him, &c., &c. The defendant, *Zalim*, made a free confession before the Magistrate. He deponed that a criminal connection had existed between *Lootcha Singh* and *Phooljhurea*, wife of his own brother, who was absent. That fear of loss of caste resulting, should the intercourse be fruitful, he had first remonstrated with *Lootcha Singh*; but finding him deaf to reproof, he murdered him one night, and threw his body the same night into the Ganges. No question was asked the prisoner, and the confession having been written in a corner of the room, out of ear-shot of the Saheb, was attested by him and three witnesses, as a free and unextorted confession of murder.

* File of papers of a case.

† By the good fortune of the presence,

"Sundry witnesses deponed to having heard of the existence of a criminal intimacy between the deceased and his brother's wife *Phooljhurea*. That they heard defendant reprove the deceased; and that certain witnesses heard defendant threaten to kill him. But nobody saw the deed done. Nobody was found. There was no bloody weapon—no marks of a struggle, or other indication of violence. The Magistrate committed *Zalim Singh* to take his trial before the Sessions Judge for the wilful murder of his nephew *Lootcha Singh*.

"The prisoner confessed before the Judge. The witnesses corroborated what they had previously deponed to. The law officer gave a *futwa* of "*kissas*"* and the Judge referred the *misl* of the case to the Suddur Nizamut Adalat, and recommended that *Zalim Singh* should be hanged.

"In due course of time the file of papers was laid before their worships, the Judges of the Court of Nizamut Adalat. One Judge concurred in opinion with the Sessions Judge and was for hanging *Zalim Singh*. But, for the credit of the "*Saheban Aleeshan*,"† the second Judge, Mr. ———, differed entirely from all the other sahebs. He observed, that *Zalim* had himself gone to the thanah of *Bewugoofpoor*, and reported that *Lootcha Singh* was missing. That the Magistrate had merely attested his deposition, without putting a single question to him. That the wording of the confessions, as recorded before the Kotwal, the Magistrate and Sessions Judge, were almost similar, verbatim; that although the evidence went to prove that a family dispute had occurred, and that the prisoner *Zalim* had been heard to threaten *Lootcha Singh*; yet that there was no proof of the murder having been committed at all, as the '*corpus delicti*,' the only positive proof was wanting. He, therefore, voted against capital punishment, and recommended that the prisoner be confined for life; or until *Lootcha Singh* turned up.

"The whole of the Judges concurred with Mr. ———, and *Zalim Singh*, branded on the forehead as a felon, was transported to Goruckpore. *Gudha Purshad* was turned out and declared to be incapable of again serving Government, and the Kotwal received a very oily purwanah of good-conduct, and a reward of 500 rupees.

"The Saheb Joint recorded the deposition of *Lootcha Singh*. He stated that he had had a criminal connection with *Phooljhurea*. That he was afraid of his uncle *Zalim*; and hearing on the evening of his alleged murder, that a regiment of sepoys was encamped only a few miles off, and was proceeding to Bengal, he went and enlisted, and accompanied the regiment to Bengal. That having heard, incidentally, that his uncle *Zalim Singh* had been transported as a felon, he had taken leave, returned to his village; and come to the Huzoor to declare the whole truth.

"The Saheb did not lose a day in sending for *Zalim Singh* from Goruckpore; and when he was questioned, I made it a point to

* Retaliation—as blood for blood.

† Gentlemen of exalted rank.

be present. The Saheb told him that he was free, as his nephew was proved to be alive. The poor victim of the law burst into tears, threw himself at the Saheb's feet, and pointing to his branded brow, asked the Joint Magistrate of what use would freedom be to him, when he bore the mark of Cain for life? He was asked why he had confessed three several times? He submitted, that the Saheb himself would have done so under similar circumstances. That he was kept in a privy, with putrid ordure up to his knees all night, and exposed to the influence of a burning sun all day. Until, maddened by the treatment, and wishing for death, at any rate, a release from his intolerable torture, he confessed just as he had been tutored to do by the Kotwal. He stated that not a question had been put to him by the Magistrate or Judge; and that on attempting to speak, he was rebuked. He said that his release was a matter of indifference, as he was broken-hearted, and could not shew his face again in the company of honest men, owing to his branded brow.

"The Saheb Joint sent up a strong representation to the Nizamut Adawlut. He recommended that the Kotwal should be dismissed, made to refund the reward he had received, and tried criminally for having trumped up a false case of murder. That *Gudha Purshad* should be employed again and receive a reward from Government; and that poor *Zalim Singh* be supported at the expense of the state for life. This was asking only what was due from the Government. But what was the result.

"Poor *Zalim* was, of course, released; but no provision was made for him, nor any recompence awarded for his branded forehead. *Gudha Purshad* remained unnoticed. And as for the Kotwal, not only did he *not* disgorge the reward of 500 rupees given him for his iniquity, but he was retained in possession of his appointment; and for ought I know, is still a 'Jack in office.'

"I saw that the *Saheb* was very greatly disgusted at all this; but he was helpless, and was obliged to swallow his indignation. I could not help reflecting, however, on the cruelty of the punishment of branding or '*Godena*,' and Government has always objected to mutilation of a limb, because the culprit is thereby rendered helpless for life. But a branded felon, if ever released, is punished even more severely than by mutilation. He is morally degraded and rendered an outcast from the society of men. The mark has mutilated his moral character, and disqualified him from resuming a reputation, of which he was innocently deprived, and he ought no longer to be made liable for raising his hands against those who point to that mark as a disgrace and a reproach. It were well if our legislators gave the subject the reflection it merits, and repealed the damning law.* But I forget that I am a poor, ignorant orderly, and must not presume to give a hint even to my betters."

* Act of 1849 has been promulgated, prohibiting the branding of convicts.

CHAP. VII.

A PORTRAIT OF A PROSPEROUS POLICEMAN.

I was connected with *Jubbur Khan* by marriage ; and we saw each other frequently. *Jubbur Khan* was confidential orderly to *Nimaz Khan*, one of the officials of police ; and he had played his cards so cleverly that he had a considerable sum of money in cash, besides jewels with which his wife and children were bedecked. Some five years ago my friend was a poor devil of a *burkundaz*,* his own clothes were ragged, and his appearance was meagre. His wife and children were in rags and half-starved. Whereas now he is as unctuous-looking a man as ever lived upon a *pouh* of *gheet*† per diem. Of course we frequently compared notes ; and this is the marrow of his story.

When a suitor goes to the thannah, it is the duty of *Jubbur Khan* to take him aside and enquire how much he will give for settling the case in his favor. A bargain is driven, and the utmost squeezed out of the party that can possibly be obtained. Even a pair of shoes, a *topee*,‡ or a *kummurbund*§ are accepted, in the absence of anything more valuable. Of course *Jubbur Khan* swears to his patron that he takes nothing for himself, and is content, like a well-behaved jackall, to feast on the lion's leavings ; but not a day passes without his pocketing something handsome ; and many is the time that the lion's share has fallen to his lot. He told me that his cue was to get up a *moamlah*|| against some rich *Muhajun*,¶ or other wealthy person. For then, if the rich man would not fork out handsomely, nothing was easier than to word the *kyfeut* of the police report, so as to induce the *Hakim*** to issue an order for a *tuhkeekat*,†† and then a golden harvest was reaped. For instance—a man well dressed (as every swindling blackguard may be) appears in the thannah and gives a formal complaint against a *nouputtee Muhajun*‡‡ for the abduction of his sister, or daughter, or wife. Now such a charge is not cognizable ; but, like an artful dodger, *Jubbur Khan* tells the complainant to state that the woman had 500 rupees' worth of jewels on her person, which the defendant has also robbed him of. The complainant takes the hint and depones accordingly ; and as he expects to get a handsome sum of money from the *Muhajun* for giving in a *razeenama*§§ he gives a fee of 25 rupees to *Nimaz Khan*, and *Jubbur* is sent to the *Muhajun's* house with warrant.

Jubbur Khan blusters and bullies the unfortunate *Muhajun*, and producing his warrant, declares that, although much against his wish, he must take *Dumree Lall* to the thannah. The *Muhajun* gives 100 rupees for a day's respite, and *Jubbur Khan* returns to the thannah. Next day he goes again to the *Muhajun*,

* Police constables are so called.

† Half a pound of clarified butter.

‡ Cap.

§ Waistband.

|| Case.

¶ Banker.

** Official governor.

†† Enquiry.

‡‡ Highest caste of banker.

§§ Compromise.

who sends his confidential man with another 100 rupees to *Nimaz Khan*. At first the *Karindah* is well bullied, his master abused, and a threat held out that every mother's son shall be *chalaned*.* At length *Jubbur Khan* folds his hands before *Nimaz Khan*, and after lauding him to the skies, as the soul of honour and peerless amongst the undaunted, entreats that the thanadar would reflect for a moment, whether it be possible for a man of such respectability as *Dumree Lall Sahoo* to have committed such an act as the prosecutor charges him with. That *Dumree Lall* is a *nouputtee Muhajun*, and a man of reputed munificence; whereas he had heard from several people that the prosecutor is a *Dullal*† and a *budmash*,‡ etc. Here the *Mohurir* and *Jumadar* edge in a word in praise of *Dumree Lall* and in abuse of the prosecutor. *Nimaz Khan* relaxes the austerity of his countenance, and acknowledges that he *had* heard of the *hounsilah*§ of *Dumree Sahoo*, etc. He takes the *Karindah* into a private apartment, and after a short while dismisses him. The prosecutor is sent for, abused most heartily, and threatened with all the most unheard-of severities, if he again presumes to make such a false complaint against people of respectability. The *Dullal* respectfully enquires whether the small sum of 25 rupees had been received by the thanadar or not. He appeals to *Jubbur Khan*; but one and all turn upon him, call him a liar and scoundrel, and he is summarily kicked out. A report goes up to the Saheb Magistrate, simply intimating that a charge of abduction had been brought by a *Dullal* against *Dumree Lall Sahoo*; that the *Huzoor* knows well the character of *Dullals*, and that as the charge was not cognisable by the police, the prosecutor was referred to the "*Adalut-ool-alea*,"|| And thus ends the farce.

Jubbur Khan gave me a very amusing account of the clever way in which a part of stolen property, chiefly jewels and gems, is appropriated by the police, after recovery. A party complains that he has been robbed of a large amount of jewels and precious stones. Part is found; and almost always one or more choice specimens are reserved for the thanadar. It is scarcely probable that *every* thing stolen will be recovered; consequently the occasional loss of any part of the property is put down to the account of the thief. But no one ever thinks of suspecting the police. And if suspicion be excited "*cheh faedah*?"¶ Where is the proof?

Jubbur Khan was desired one day to apprehend a suspected coiner, who had been circulating a quantity of base coin. Such is the cleverness of these fellows, that it is asserted as a fact, that the very day the new Company's rupee was circulated, a supply of the base coin was simultaneously sent into the bazaar. The coiners never utter their own coin; but have

* Sent to the magistrate. † Broker. ‡ A bad character. § Liberality.

|| The exalted seat of justice.

¶ Cui bono?

agents of every grade, who pass a few base rupees along with a number of good ones. Well, friend *Jubbur* proceeded boldly to the house of *Jalea Pershad*, and calling out to him, declared he had come to intimate the Huzoor's orders. He was desired to remain outside, until the women were put out of the way; and after a quarter of an hour's delay, he was ushered in, with extreme civility, into the presence of *Jalea Pershad*. *Jubbur* produced his warrant, and told him that he must accompany him at once to *Nimaz Khan*, and bullied him roundly for keeping him so long a time at the door. *Jalea Pershad* begged of him to be pacified; declared his readiness to accompany him at once; and, before leaving his house, put a gold-mohur into *Jubbur Khan's* hand, and begged of him to mention nothing of the detention outside *Jalea's* house. The *Sahoo* took a bag of a hundred *inducements* with him in case of need, and departed with *Jubbur Khan*.

On reaching the thannah, the first order given is to put *Jalea Pershad* in the stocks. He is taken away for the purpose; but whispers to *Jubbur Khan* to tell *Nimaz Khan* that he has brought a *nuzzur** for his worship. The thanadar receives the inducements, and finds them sufficiently weighty to remove the prisoner's feet from the stocks. He is introduced into a decent room apart from the others, and his people are permitted to bring in his *bistoor*,† and to make him as comfortable as circumstances will permit.

Of course *Jalea Pershad* gets off, minus the *inducements*, for there is no proof against him. And *Jubbur Khan* swears, that not only did he not see anything suspicious in *Jalea's* house, but that he was at once admitted therein.

In short, by *Jubbur Khan's* statement, the execution of a search warrant, or a warrant of apprehension, may be always evaded if the delinquent is able to oil palms. For, as he candidly confessed, the *Sirkar Bahadoor*‡ gives me four rupees a month, and the offer of a sum equivalent to six months' pay, often, or occasionally, ought not to be resisted by an orderly.

CHAP. VIII.

THE MOOKTYAR TRIBE ILLUSTRATED BY EXAMPLES.

There are a set of miscreants that infest the courts, than whom a greater nuisance does not exist; I mean the *Mooktyars*, or Attorneys. Without any pretence to education, without any legal knowledge, they derive a maintenance by fomenting quarrels, by mystifying their clients by misquotations, of the "*Qanoon-i-Sircar*,"§ and the "*circoolar chittees*,"|| and the "*cant-*

* Good-will offering.

† Carpet bedding.

‡ The State.

§ Regulations of Government.

|| Circular orders.

ractions”* of the Nizamut Adalut. Noisy declamation and lying are their talent, and extreme impudence is their privilege. Rebuked, fined, turned out as they have been, they contrive to creep in again, as soon as there is a change of administration. Many an amusing scene have I witnessed, and many a *rise* do they take out of the *hakims*.

Lutees Pershad is a well-known character. Like the immortal practitioners, Dodson and Fogg, he undertakes cases on *spec*. If his client cannot pay, it does not signify; he contents himself with the client's signature to a bit of stamp-paper, an I O U in short. Months afterwards, the client is astonished to find that his little property is attached in execution of a decree, passed in favour of the decree-holder, *Lutees Pershad*. Houses, shares of villages, orchards, have thus dropped in “*by accident*” into the maw of this worthy.

I was in the room, when he presented a petition on the part of *Chenala Begum*,† *purdah nusheen*, praying that the magistrate would punish one *Syud Moofukhur-ood-Dowlah*, a *budmash*, who had fraudulently robbed her of jewels to the amount of 10,000 rupees. The *Huzoor* ordered the *Mooktyar-namah* to be attested, when out stepped *Syud Moofukhur-ood-Dowlah*, presented a petition, and verbally declared to the *Huzoor* that the plaintiff had been a courtesan in the city, and had been taken into the keeping of his master, Nuwab, and that having been indiscriminate in her amours, his master had turned her out. He affirmed that she was not a *purdah nusheen*, and that *Lutees Pershad* had got up a Dodson and Fogg case. The Saheb rejected the *Mooktyar-namah*, and directed that the woman should appear in person and give her deposition upon oath, if she really had any charge to make against *Mofoukhur-ood-Dowlah*.

Next day *Lutees Pershad* intimated to the magistrate, that his client had come to the *Kucheree*‡ in a *doolee*,§ and begged that the *doolee* might be bodily introduced into the room. This was agreed to, and a *Mohurir*|| proceeded to take her deposition. The *Mooktyar* was asked whether *Chenala Begum* was really inside the *doolee*? He replied in the affirmative; but *Moofukhur-ood-Dowlah* submitted that it might be somebody else. That, perhaps, the lady was right in keeping behind a *purdah*, for she was old, wrinkled, and ugly, etc. Upon this, the screen of the *doolee* was hastily thrown aside; and with a torrent of abuse, that amused and surprised everybody, out walked the lady, and going boldly to the defendant, asked how *he*, who was only nominally a man, could dare to call *her* old and ugly? She was in fact *passé*, but bore the traces of beauty, and affected extreme haughtiness. The magistrate was

* Constructions of regulations.

† A female of reputed respectability—one sitting behind a screen.

‡ Office. § Covered conveyance, carried by men. || Writer—scribe.

not a little amused at the scene ; but he proceeded to business, and took the woman's deposition on oath. A few cross questions made her confess that the charge of robbery was false—that she had been a common prostitute—had been in keeping of Nuwab....., and that *Moofukhur-ood-Dowlah* was a lover of hers—that he had discarded her—and that by the advice of *Lutees Pershad*, she had personated a *purdah nusheen*, and trumped up a charge of robbery against her old flame. Of course, *Chenala Begum* was fined for a false and malicious complaint; and *Lutees Pershad* was fined roundly for having caused the false complaint to be instituted.

A clever *Mooktyar*, one *Lallah Door-undesh* once played off a fine trick on a *rayther* soft Joint Saheb. There had been a serious affray in the country and two men died of *lathee* wounds. A consideration was given to the thanadar, who ordered the corpses to be burned and thrown into the river ; and a report was sent up to the *Huzoor*, to the effect that a slight *mar peet** had taken place ; but that the *fidwee*† had proceeded to the spot, and satisfied himself that the affray had been so trifling, as to be unworthy of notice. That *Joot Bhur*, Goraet,‡ had indeed informed him that two men had died who were concerned in the affray, but having made due inquiry, he, the *fidwee*, had ascertained that the deceased had been laid up with fever for three months, and that they must have died of natural disease. That in the "*ukkil-nakhis*"§ of the thanadar no further investigation was needed, and he recommended that *Joot Bhur* be dismissed. While the Joint Saheb was in deep meditation, puzzled what to do, up walks *Lallah Door-undesh*, and salaming profoundly, offers a petition, purporting that his client was son and heir to one of the deceased, and declared that the deceased did really die of disease, and that the heir prayed that the "*razeenama*"|| be accepted. The *Huzoor's* countenance gleamed with satisfaction at this untying of the Gordian knot ; and turning approvingly to *Lallah Door-undesh*, he enquired whether the petitioner were present ? An answer was given in the affirmative, and a lad of twelve years produced. The Saheb then asked the *Mooktyar*, whether the boy was really and in truth the heir to the deceased ? To which *Door-undesh* replied, with a becoming smirking humility, "Can the *Huzoor* imagine that any one would presume to think that the *Huzoor* could be deceived ? " *Jenab-i-allei*"¶ knows that such a thing is impossible, and that he, the "*Doulut-i-Khawah*"** is incapable of deception." The Saheb, entirely satisfied, cocks his hat and tells the Moonshee—" *buhot khoob, razeenama munzoor, misl dakhil duftur.*"†† The poor Moonshee endeavours to remind the Saheb that there are strong presumptions of homicide having been committed—that there is no proof that the boy, who gave the *raze-*

* Beating.

† Slave.

‡ Village watchman.

§ Defective judgment. || Compromise ¶ Great lord. ** Desirer of riches.

†† "Very well. The compromise is accepted. Put the case on the shelf."

nama, is not a fictitious personage, &c. When *Lallah Door-undesh* breaks in with—"Thus it is, sir, that the *Omlah* try to warp your impartial judgment, for their own base purposes; even after your honour has passed a final order, which is equal in discrimination to the judgment of Solomon." The Moon-shee gets wigged for presuming to dictate to the *Huzoor*, and the parties leave the *Kucheree* in triumph.

Lallah Door-undesh not only benefits by fees from the thanadar, and the parties concerned in the affray, but his character rises to the culminating point in the regions of public opinion. People at once perceive how he can tickle the Saheb, and client after client comes with his retaining fee to entreat the services of *Lalla Door-undesh*. He walks consequentially towards his "*ekka*;" (*anglicè*, hack-cab) and meeting the Moonshee Jee, in the way, jostles him and passes on, inflated with vanity and consequence.

CHAP. IX.

THE NUISANCE OF THE DULLALS.

It is not, perhaps, generally known that in the ancient and holy city of *Kashee* (Benares) there have existed from time immemorial, and do exist at the present moment, several classes of men who live by extorting from the citizens and devout pilgrims more than is sufficient to maintain them in the most recklessly profligate career. They levy a regular and systematic "*black mail*" upon high and low, rich and poor. No rank or station is above their reach; and no person is so poor as to be unable to afford these gentry profit, either by payments in coin, or by some kind of service. The wealthy *Baboo*, the *nouputtee Muhajun*, the *Vakeels*; the *Omlah*, the very *Moonsiffs* and *Sudder Ameens* are subjected to their influence. For either by direct violence, or by a veneration for "*dustur*," these worthies are coerced. I allude to the *Pundahs*, the *Gunga Pooters*, the *Ghateas*, the *Burureahs*, the *Dullals*, a tribe of carrion-crows with which the city is infested, and under whose domination it groans. In attempting to expose the villany and oppression of a class, I shall not stoop to delineate individuals; for the law can reach them when known. But my object is to shew the public a body of miscreants, who, by their combination and the force of circumstances, defy all law; which as "*an Orderly*" I am able to do from personal experience.

Go into the *chouk** and attempt to purchase the most trivial article. Take up a pair of shoes or a shawl, and you will find a *Dullal*† at your elbow. The man praises one thing, abuses another; beats down the price of the vendor authoritatively; and you are surprised that such disinterested officiousness should be shown to a stranger in a crowded *chouk*. The man

* Market-square.

† Broker

civilly offers to take you whithersoever you please; and to assist you in purchasing whatever you may require. You return home wondering what was the man's inducement to waste his own time in chaffering for you?—I lift the curtain to shew you that the vendors and your "*chaperone*" are in league; that your complaisant friend is a *dullal*, who takes very good care to lower the vendor's price only so much as to admit of his coming in for a handsome *dusturee*.* The difference between the bazar price, and the amount price of the article sold, is the "*huq*"† of the *Dullal*! You will ask whether the vendor may not himself pocket the whole of the money? I answer, that he dare not. The whole of the *Dullals* would cabal against him; would cry down his wares; would thrash him within an inch of his life; would by force prevent purchasers from attending his shop. "Can such things be?" you ask. Can the authorities submit tamely to such outrages. Why do not the parties who are cheated or bullied, complain to the Magistrate? They *have* tried the experiment, and although in a few instances successful, they have generally failed in obtaining redress from want of judicial proof. Moral conviction is one thing, and judicial proof another. And were a Magistrate to punish on moral conviction alone, his judgment would, in all probability, be reversed by the Judge in appeal; who, having to form *his* judgment by the *written evidence*, must be guided by *judicial proof alone*. Let me illustrate the practices of the *Dullals* by an example.

The largest, if not the only, wholesale grain market in Benares is the *Trilochun bazar*, between the city and the *Burna Sungum ghat*. Here as elsewhere, the *Dullals* have established their sway. One of the principal of these was *Bisheshur Singh*, who contrived by some means or other to eke out a comfortable subsistence by his iniquitous practices. If a boat put to at the ghat, and any transaction with the grain market was negotiated, *Bisheshur* claimed his *huq*. If the grain were attempted to be sold direct to the owner of the *Gunje*, *Bisheshur Singh* gathered his band of *Dullals* together, got up a scrimmage, and himself lodged the first complaint in the thannah; but the proprietor of the *Gunje*, *Sheikh Chalah*, was a cautious and canny cove, and managed always to escape being saddled with the onus of these rows. *Bisheshur Singh* waited patiently until there was a change in the administration; and no sooner was a new Magistrate appointed, than he presented a thundering petition to the *Huzoor*, purporting that the *Gunje*‡ was public property—that the former *Hakims* had removed all taxes and cesses, and had declared every person at liberty to land and sell his grain at will—that *Beoparees*§ brought large fleets of boats, laden with grain for the use of the city, but that owing to the great oppression of *Sheikh Chalah* they would not land the grain. That a tax of so much per boat was

*Customary *douceur*. † Right. ‡ Market. § Grain Merchants.

taken by the *Sheikh* from every *Beoparee*, that the grain was forcibly stacked in the granaries of the *Trilochun*, and that the *Sheikh* took a fixed sum per maund for selling the grain, &c. Scores of similar petitions were filed by parties calling themselves *Beoparees*.

To these charges, *Sheikh Chalah* merely replied, that he was owner of the grain market at *Trilochun*—that he made large advances to *Beoparees* in distant provinces, who brought or sent the grain to his market; that he provided *chokedars** for the protection of the boats—that he afforded accommodation to the *Beoparees* for their grain in his ample store-houses, where it remained until sold—that he supplied money to the *Beoparees* on the hypothecation of their grain—that in short, he was merely a *broker* on a large scale; and received from the *Beoparees* only that brokerage, which mutual convenience and long usage, had established. The *Saheb Magistrate* desired his Assistant to go the next morning and make enquiries on the spot; and I accompanied him as his orderly. When the Assistant reached the bazar, there was a great crowd, crying out “*Coompanee ka dohaee !† Saheb Shistant ka dohaee !*” The *Chota Saheb‡* seemed quite perplexed, and asked the people what they had to say? “*dohaee ! dohaee ! Sheikh Chalah has ruined us and cheated us,*” was all he heard. Upon this, turning round to me, he sagaciously asked “*Panchkouree, are these poor people very ill that they want dowae ?§ Why do they not go to the Doctor ?*” I humbly submitted that they were not ill, but cried for justice, or *dohaee*. But, said the *Saheb, dowae or dohaee, it is all one; for the poor men appear to be grievously oppressed. Here, Moonshee, sowal purho.||* Some fifty petitions were read; the petitioners answered to their names, and the puzzled *Saheb Shistant¶* looked at one, and then at another, and yawned from the sheer fatigue of thinking so profoundly. I whispered in his ear, “*May it please the Jenab-i-alee to enquire whether the petitioners in the crowd present are real Beoparees or not? Your slave recognises them as Budmashus Dullals.*” The hint was taken, and the *Saheb* himself put the question to every petitioner: “*Toom kone ?*” *Dullal hyee Khodawund,*** was the invariable answer. “*Very strange,*” said the *Saheb Shistant*, “*where are the oppressed and aggrieved Beoparees? Turn out the rascals, Darogah, and bring me the Beoparees from the bazar and the boats.*” Several *Beoparees* presented themselves; who denied that they had any cause of complaint against *Sheikh Chalah*—that they paid him brokerage by the custom of the country—but that they *had* to complain against *Bisheshur Singh* and his rascally *Dullals*, who by the abuse and cajolery, cheated them out of small sums of money daily. The *Saheb Shistant* represented matters truly to the *Magistrate*, who “*dakhill duftured*” the case.

* Watchmen. † Cry for Justice. ‡ Young Gentleman. § Medicine.
 || Read the Petition. ¶ The Assistant. ** Who are you? A broker, Sir.

“Why was not the principal, *Bisheshur Singh*, punished?” you ask. For a plain reason. He would have appealed to the *Saheb Allee Jah*,* the Judge. He would have proved by the evidence of fifty witnesses that he had received, as his father had done before him from time out of mind, a fixed rate for every boat that arrived at the ghat—that the owner of the bazar was the oppressor, etc., etc., and the Magistrate’s order would have been reversed. It is true, justice is a grand thing: but who can expect it without *judicial proof*?

As a commentary on the courts of the *Coompanee Bahadoor*, I shall relate a fact. Some five-and-twenty years ago, an *Afghan* appeared with his servant, a *Hindoostanee*, in the Magistrate’s Court at Moradabad. He, upon oath, declared that he had caught his servant in the act of stealing a fistfull of rupees. The servant denied. “Where are your witnesses, my friend?” said the Magistrate to the *Afghan*. The *Mogul*, after a moment’s reflection, collared his servant, and beating him soundly, called out, “Why did you not, you scoundrel, bring witnesses, when you came to rob me?” Whether the Magistrate took the hint or not, I know not.

CHAP. X.

THE PUNDAHS, THE PRELITICAL ORDER OF BRAHMINISM.

The “*Pundahs*,” in the holy city of *Kashee*, are the *prelates* of their priesthood, and, like every other calling in India, the sacred offices are even hereditary. They are not bound to celibacy. Their wealth is enormous. Their lives are a tissue of profligacy, arrogance, fraud, and deceit; and as for morals, “*they never had any.*” Like the Papal pretensions of universal supremacy, they arrogate to themselves privileges, and superiority over the laity; and assert them with a haughtiness exceeding that of *Thomas-à-Becket*. The daily offerings at the celebrated temples and the shrines they contain, are collected by officiating priests who account to the *Pundahs*. The annual income of the temples is enormous; for, like the Papal church, the Hindoo system of religion allows of the compounding of every sin—from a peccadillo to homicide—for a consideration; and the greater the amount of guilt, the larger, of course, is the propitiatory offering, and the greater the profit of the priests. The ordinary ceremonials and sacrificial rites are performed by the “*Poojerees*.” The *Pundah* officiates only on grand occasions, when some wealthy *Rajah* or *Baboo* makes his advent in *Kashee*, and offers to propitiate the gods by an offering, in proportion to the enormity of his sins. Then, indeed, the satellites of the “*Sree Pundah Jee*” are on the alert; and desperate becomes the conflict of wits, between cupidity on one side, and superstition mixed with avarice on the other.

* Gentleman of exalted rank.

When his Highness the ex-Peishwa came to *Kashee*, after the death of his father, and solicited the *Pundah* of the great temple of *Visheswar* to assist him in the fulfilment of his vows, he refused to do so, until the Maharajah should fill with coined silver the *houz*, or font of the temple. This was acceded to; and it was found that one lakh and twenty-five thousand rupees were required for that purpose. A goodly breakfast, I ween, and sufficient for a time to stay the cravings of a morbid sacerdotal appetite. On other occasions he is induced to attend the temple, when some zealous votary lures him thither with the promise of an after-recreation, in which "the choicest specimens of the sweet songstresses of Ind" enrapture the senses by their voluptuous song and dance. The *Pundahs* like the elders of old, are connoisseurs of beauty; and those who cannot afford the lure of wealth, make use of the lure of beauty to ensure the honour of the *Pundah's* presence.

The office of *Pundah* is hereditary; and where the family has increased, a division of the profits of the temple proceeds is always made. Fierce contentions take place among the brotherhood for their shares, and then the easily-gotten wealth of the *Pundahs* finds a channel for itself into the pockets of the *Vakeels* of the Civil Courts. Tact and ability, however, render one of the parties superior to the others; and he becomes, in fact, the *Pundah Jee*.

The *Pundahs* do not confine themselves to the affairs of their temples, but are landed proprietors and money-lenders. They mix themselves up in the affairs of everybody, and make for themselves enemies by the unfairness of their dealings, or by pushing their creditors to extremity, by bribing the myrmidons of the law to ruin the creditors by the law. "*Ayarub Koomar Swamee*" was one of these Hindoo prelates, and was recipient of the superfluous wealth of the *Dukhan*. Lakhs of rupees flowed into his coffers to lay out in "*poojha-pat*" for the benefit of the donors. The *Swamee* offered up vicarious sacrifices in the names, and for the benefit of the senders; and he himself, by his sanctimonious office, so throve by pretending to dispense the charity of others, that his reputed wealth was enormous, besides being proprietor of houses and lands and villages. One evening, at dusk, as *Ayarub Koomar Swamee* proceeded to the temple of "*Keedarnath*" to perform certain rites; and, as he perambulated the temple, previously to entering therein, he was shot dead with a pistol, which burst in the assassin's hand. But although hundreds of persons witnessed the deed, nobody recognised the homicide, and he made off. Some days afterwards, a man from the *Telingah* country was found in the haunts of some noted *budmashes*, with his right hand injured by the explosion of gunpowder. The Magistrate succeeded in adducing sufficient proof to hang him; but it was never known for certain, who had instigated the homicide. As usual, in such cases, the most contradictory and absurd reports were spread; but the most probable conjecture is, that some rich party, with whom he was

at law, and whom he had pushed hard, had instigated the murder.

Many a dark deed has been done, and is done, in the extensive houses of these *Pundahs* and *Poojarees*. While the gong is loudly sounding, and scores of athletic priests are blowing *sunkhs** in the numerous temples that are dotted about and around the houses, the last expiring shriek of some victim is, perhaps, suppressed by the noise. Disobedient "*chelas*,"† victims of jealousy, and unnatural crimes, die by slow torture, or poison, or famine. No intimation is, or can be, given to the police; for none but the initiated and privileged may enter these houses, sanctified by the numerous temples. And who, but the most devoted and trust-worthy, are ever permitted to see the dark places where crime is committed. It is believed generally, but I speak not from experience (for being of the faith of *Islam*, I am not permitted to approach such places), that in the innermost recesses of several temples, is a shrine dedicated to "*Devee*" or "*Bhowanee*;" those infernal Deities whose delight is in blood, where children of tender age are enticed, and offered up on certain occasions. Frequent are the reports made to the police that children are missing—the informants suspect nobody; and no trace of the innocents is ever found. Can it be that they are the victims of the horrible suspicion I have alluded to?

A *Pundah* consulted some learned Brahmins about the horoscope of his infant son, his first-born. It was foretold that the shadow of the child would press heavily upon the fortunes or life of the father. The *Pundah* took the infant in his arms, fondled it with apparent delight. On returning it to the mother's arms it was a breathless corpse. He had squeezed the nape of the neck, to prevent the fulfilment of the horoscope!!! Some person inimical to him lodged a formal complaint before the Magistrate. The Magistrate, after taking the deposition of the informant, summoned the *Pundah* to appear in person and answer to the charge of infanticide. He evaded process for a long while; but, at last, was forced to appear before the *Huzoor*. But what can simple honesty of purpose in a Magistrate do against the combinations of wealth and venality? The *Pundah* was acquitted "from want of judicial proof."

As for the *Poojarees*, "whose name is legion," their mal-practices are the theme of every discourse. They are the usual heirs of all persons dying intestate, when the deceased have any property to leave. Their quarrels form the bulk of the cases in the Civil Courts. Instead of the monastic rigidity of morals, which they obtain credit for, they are more than suspected of all the vices imputed to the monks. How rapidly-soever the Hindoos of the present day may be casting off the shackles of an enslaving creed, and they begin to think for themselves, and to believe that all mankind has emanated from one Supreme Divinity; yet they are influenced by their *Poojarees* and *Pundahs* more than I can describe. One besetting practice has long existed; for men,

* Large shells.

† Disciples—Scholars.

whose marriages have proved unfruitful, to take their wives to the shrines appropriated for the purpose, and to leave them there, for a period of weeks or of months ; and such is generally the efficacy of the practice that fertility is the result, to the joy and belief of the happy husband.

CHAP. XI.

THE GHATEAS, GUNGAPOOTRAS, AND AGHORPUNTS.

I said that the "*Pundahs*" of the temples in "*Kashee*" are a curse to the city. How then shall I describe the "*Gungapootras*" and the "*Ghateas*" who, like a foul ulcer, are daily increasing, and eroding the vitals of their deluded victims ? From the *Burna Sungam ghat* to the *Assee*, a distance of some five miles, the bank of the Ganges is besprinkled with temples, *cutcha chubootras*, or wooden platforms, called *tukht poshes* that overlook the brink of the holy stream ; and scarcely a cubit's length is left for a landing-place for boats and travellers. Every one of these *chubootras* or *tukhtposhes*, is occupied by its proprietor, who sits cross-legged, in the simple dignity of nudity with his "*chundun*"* and flowers, mumbling out in a measured and monotonous voice the names of their favored divinities. Every orthodox Hindoo, as he comes out of the broad bosom of *Gunga-mae*, makes an offering to the *Ghatea* ; who, in return, marks his forehead with *chundun*, and pronounces a blessing on him. But when the bathers are foreigners, they are not permitted even to approach the stream, in places occupied by the *Ghateas*, until they pay down the sum demanded from them. Numerous are the petitions given in to the Sabe Magistrate Bahadoor against these *Ghateas*, and frequently an order is passed to the police to see that the complainants are not prevented from taking a dip. In such cases the *Ghateas* commence a volley of curses, the most foul and blasphemous that can be imagined. And what Hindoo can stand out against the curses of a *Brahmin* and a *Ghatea* ? The bathers appeal to the police burkundazes, but they coolly say, " We have no orders to prevent the *Ghateas* from speaking." If a small *douceur* be offered, it is indignantly rejected, and the bathers reflect that if a considerable gratuity is to be given, they had better conform to the "*dustur*," and give it to the *Ghateas* as "*poon*."†

Some of these *Ghateas* go to the most distant provinces, and join a troop of pilgrims coming to Benares. Or they follow in the wake of some Rajah or Baboo, who has vowed to perform a tour of pilgrimages. The whole of the party are then dubbed "*his jijmans*"‡ by the *Ghatea*. He considers them under his special protection. No one else may take a fraction from them ; and the *Ghatea* and *his* partners alone reap the harvest. If other *Ghateas* interfere, serious affrays ensue ; and the Magistrate is bewildered with their mutual complaints and recrimina-

* Sandal wood.

† Good work.

‡ A person who employs priests.

tions. Suppose that the rich pilgrims choose to assert independence of will, and to make presents to other *Ghateas*, then the parties, who think themselves aggrieved, threaten to stab themselves in the presence of the pilgrims; and rather than be responsible for shedding the blood of a *Ghatea*, they are fain to give in on any conditions.

The "*Gungapootras*" are "sons of the Ganges," and exercise despotic sway in their domain of the "*Munkurnika*." Their numbers are considerable; and in the division of spoil, desperate conflicts occur. But they know that "union is strength; and consequently always combine to hunt the common prey—the Hindoo public. The "*Munkurnika*" is a reservoir lined with flags of hewn stone on the bank of the Ganges. During the rise of the river, it is filled with the sacred stream. Besides which, a puny springlet dribbles into this basin from the land-side; and during the hottest season of the year, suffices to keep up a filthy puddle, rendered more and more impure by the daily immersion of hundreds; but nevertheless, this filthy semifluid matter is looked upon by the Hindoo as the purest of the pure—the cleanser from sin and moral impurity. The "*Koondh*" is thronged every morning by votaries, each with his silver in hand, to bestow upon his *Gungapootra*, and eager to plunge into the basin of holy water. And who dares venture to take a dip in it without first obtaining the permission of the *Gungapootras*? He would run the risk of being beaten to death; or of being found "*suffocated by accident*," as he dipped into the *Koondh*. Mr. Prinsep gives the following account:—

"*Gungapootras* (sons of the Ganges), who enjoy hereditary possession of most of the ground between high and low water mark: the third sort consists of *muths* or *murhees* (small temples), erected at the expense of pilgrims and others; they generally have a flat roof to serve still as a *chubootra* for the proprietor or *Ghatea* to sit upon, who not unfrequently allows the temple to fall into premature decay, and sells the space again to another pious dupe. As a criterion of the value of such property, it may be mentioned, that when Maharaja Sindea, in 1829, wished to repair the dilapidated ghat of Beereswur, next adjoining to *Munkurnika ghat*, he could not obtain the good will of the *Gungapootras* under 15,000 rupees, although they were promised the reconstruction of their *chubootras*, and their right of occupancy was to remain unfringed."

These *Gungapootras* and *Ghateas* are generally the greatest "*budmashes*" in the place. There is not a crime or enormity of which they are not suspected, but of which they are supposed to be incapable. Violent assaults on women and boys, with criminal intent, are common; but very few such cases are ever reported by the police, or if reported, they are slurred over and represented as "*tukrar-i-khufef*."* The assailants are protected by their wealth and their position; and unless the complainants can afford to pay more largely than the *Ghateas*, they are not

* A petty dispute.

likely to obtain redress. A common practice among the disreputable of these *Ghateas* is to jostle a well-dressed woman, and to snatch from her nose or ears the golden jewels she wears. In dense crowds of thousands, cooped up in narrow thoroughfares, it is not easy to catch these miscreants; and if caught, they easily evade proof by giving the robbed jewel to their companions, who pass it from one to another with the rapidity of thought.

The most loathsome sight at the *ghats* are the "*Aghorpunt fuqueers*," (*Anglicè* Ogres), practical philosophers, who affect to disbelieve that there is any difference between things, and who avow that any difference depends upon the imagination. A cuff or a kick is as immaterial to them as a blessing. They go about *in puris naturalibus* with a fresh human skull in their hands, (off which they had previously eaten the putrid flesh, and from which afterwards with their fingers scooped out the brain and eyes) into which is poured whatsoever is given them to drink. They pretend to be indifferent whether it be ardent spirits or milk, or foul water. Their food is the first thing that offers, whether it be a putrid corpse, cooked food, or ordure. With matted hair, blood-red eyes, and body covered with filth and vermin, the *Aghorpunt* is an object of terror and disgust to everybody. He looks rather a wolf, ready to destroy and then devour his prey, than a human being. I once saw a wretch of this fraternity eating the head of a putrid corpse, and as I passed by he howled and pointed to me; and then scooped out the eyes and eat them before me. I had my matchlock in my hand, and was within an ace of putting a ball into his head, for I deemed him a wolf; and, in fact, he was a brute.

A Magistrate took up a monster of this sort drinking liquor out of a bloody human skull. He was in a fearful state of intoxication, and had a kind of Malay crease, a spiral dagger about a cubit long, a blow from which would have been death. The Magistrate had him taken up at once. On referring to the records of the office, it was ascertained that the wretch had been thrice imprisoned in jail for rape, for assault amounting almost to homicide, and for being a vagrant. The Magistrate ordered him to furnish heavy security for his good behaviour; or in default, to be imprisoned for three years. In all such cases the Magistrate is bound to make a report to the Judge, who sent for the *misl* of the case, and released the *Aghorpunt*.

Should not such monsters in human shape rather be incarcerated for life as a disgrace to humanity? Or would the precepts of Islam not sanction the wholesale slaughter of such brutes? But the Hindoos themselves look upon the *Aghorpunts* with veneration; and none of them would dare to drive him away from their doors. Strange infatuation in a people to worship incarnations of the divinity in every bestial shape, and to respect men even lower than the brutes.

CHAP. XII.

GENERAL VENALITY AND PERJURY OF OFFICIALS.

A practice has long prevailed, although it is less frequent now than it used to be, for people who were at feud, or when the object was to extort money from wealthy individuals, to wound themselves, and to charge others with the crime. In the good old days when Magistrates were content to look through the spectacles of their Omlah, the practice was rife; and many an innocent man has been punished by imprisonment for years through the perjury of witnesses and the venality of officials. *Jubbur Khan* assured me that he saw a *budmash* of the Mohulla *Hurha*, who had cut his throat from ear to ear with a *tulwar*, merely to criminate a neighbour, whom he suspected of an intrigue with his wife; that the man's wound took six months to heal; and that he was not imprisoned for having made a false and malicious charge, solely owing to the desperate manner in which he had wounded himself. *Jubbur Khan* was a party in investigating a case of this nature; and I shall relate the particulars as I heard them from him.

'*Sheo Suhaee Singh*, alias *Singha*, had been repeatedly imprisoned for gambling, aggravated assaults, and *budmashee*. He managed to insinuate himself into the good graces of some of the officials of the *Kotwalee*, and he used to be constantly seen at the *Kotwalee*, on pretence of attending on the bazaar that is daily held in the *chouk* to the eastward of the *Kotwalee*. Extensive ranges of stone and brick shops have lately been built by the exertions of the Magistrate Bahadoor, and wealthy Muhajuns and brokers have settled therein, for the protection afforded them by the vicinity of the police station of the city. The old *Kotwalee* is to the south of the new one, with only a road between; and any row taking place on the road should at once be suppressed by the police who are on the spot. But the focus of a policeman's vision is dependent entirely on circumstances, and should not be judged of by an ordinary standard.

'One dark night, between the hours of nine and ten, not fifty, years ago, two cloth Muhajuns, *Balkishan Dass* and *Bootchnoo*, alias *Ram Kishun*, were returning to their houses for the night, accompanied by *Bisheshur Singh*, a retainer, and some other followers. As they approached the *phatuk** of the old *Kotwalee* they were rushed upon by three men, calling out '*mar—mar.*' The Muhajuns and their party gathered close together for mutual defence, when, in the twinkling of an eye, one of the assailants was seen weltering in his blood lying on the ground. His companions shouted '*dakah—dakah*,'† and a Jemadar of police and a *phatukbundee* ‡ came to the rescue as if by magic. The Muha-

* Gateway.

† Dacoity—Robbery.

‡ Watchman of the gateway.

juns and their party were thunderstruck, and could neither advance nor retreat from fear and surprise. The wounded man proved to be one *Bhyro Ahir*, alias *Gujjoo*, who declared to the witnesses that *Bisheshur Singh* had wantonly cut him down with a sword, as he and *Singha* and another were peaceably passing the Muhajun's party on the high-road. *Singha* sang to the same tune, and the Jemadar Saheb apprehended the Muhajuns and *Bisheshur Singh*, and took them all to the Kotwalee. I need not describe how the feet of the Muhajuns were put into the stocks, nor how they were freed therefrom; suffice it, that after the usual *tuhkettkat* (which means ascertaining nothing, and fleecing and bullying the Mohulla people) the case was sent up to the Saheb Bahadoor, the report purporting that the charge of assault and wounding with a sword was fully proved against the Muhajuns.

'The Magistrate, instead of having the depositions of parties taken in the '*sheristah*,' or in a corner of his own room, was one of those *hakims* that would do every thing himself. So he boxed the prosecutor and defendants together before himself, and kept the witnesses at a distance, and apart from one another. The prosecutor, on oath, recognised *Bisheshur Singh* as the party who had cut him down with a sword without enmity or provocation; deponed that his companion *Singha* snatched away the naked sword from *Bisheshur*'s hand and seized him, and delivered him to the police, who came up just then. *Singha* swore in the same strain, with this difference, that *Bisheshur Singh* threw his own sword down after wounding *Gujjoo*. On being asked what he had been doing at that time of night with *Gujjoo*, he alleged that they had met by accident near the Kotwalee. The police Jemadar and *phatukbundee* gave the same story. The defendants denied the charge. They alleged that they were proceeding homewards; and that as they were passing the Kotwalee, *Gujjoo* and *Singha* rushed at them, *Singha* having a drawn sword in his hand; that they stopped suddenly, and *Singha* cut down his companion *Gujjoo*, threw down the sword, and crying out '*dakah—dakah*,' seized *Bisheshur Singh* and made him over, with his whole party, to the Jemadar of police and *phatukbundee*, who appeared so suddenly as to lead to the conclusion that they expected to hear of the attack, and that, in fact, they were accomplices. The *Muhajuns* gave in a similar defence, and asked whether people of their caste and profession were in the habit of using swords, and assaulting such well-known *budmashes* and desperadoes as *Gujjoo* and *Singha*?

'The magistrate himself instituted inquiries, and ascertained from the Jemadar and *phatukbundeess* stationed at '*Rajah-kadurwazah*,' that *Gujjoo* and *Singha* had attempted to pass their post about an hour before they met the party of *Muhajuns*; but seeing *Singha* with a sheathed *tulwar* in his hand, they prevented their passing, and turned them back. Certain *budmashees* who were in jail, and old friends of *Singha*, recognised the *tulwar* as a favourite weapon of his. In short, from the whole

of the bearings of the case it was plain that the charge against the *Muhajuns* was false and malicious, therefore they were released. And as *Singha* had contradicted himself in two distinct depositions given upon oath, in such a manner as to amount to *perjury*, he was committed to the Sessions, and was sentenced to imprisonment with labour in irons for seven years.'

Another common trick of the *budmashes* is to entice people of decent condition into their private houses, with seductive solicitations, and after amusing them to keep them there until they put their names to papers, just by way of showing specimens of their autographs. They have documents ready cut and dry on stamp papers of different value, duly witnessed by people who are in their pay, or who participate in their frauds, to be converted into penal bonds for value received. Months afterwards the unfortunate visitor is accosted in any public place, in the presence of numerous witnesses, and asked for the amount of his (extorted) bond. Of course the debt is denied, and the demander is cursed only for his pains. But the *budmash* calls people to witness that he *did* ask his debtor to pay the amount of his bond, which he refused to discharge. An action for debt is instituted. The *budmash* produces the bond before the Moon-siff. The witnesses are summoned, and are merely asked, 'Did you witness this *tumassook*?' 'I did, your worship,' is the reply, 'this is my signature.' The witnesses, before whom the *budmash* demanded the amount of the bond, also confirm the plaintiff's allegation. The defendant can only deny the claim, and submit that the bond was extorted. 'Where is the proof?' says the Moonsiff. 'I have none,' is the reply. And a decree is given in favour of plaintiff with costs. It is only when '*Greek meets Greek*' that the result is different. Then the defendant acknowledges the deed; but alleges that he has paid the amount with interest; and files a receipt for the amount of the bond, with interest at twelve per cent, duly attested by three '*credible*' witnesses, who appear before the Huzoor, and swear to their signatures, as well as to having seen the money repaid to the plaintiff. Here then is a go! and to decide according to justice is not an easy matter.

A celebrated Judge and Legislator, a just and honest man, who knew the native character well, candidly confessed, that whenever he had such a posing case before him, he desired the *Sheristadar* to read away—he shut his eyes, as if in deep cogitation—while all the beholders conceived that he was weighing the merits of the case mentally; he was, in truth, making up his mind to decide, according to the doctrines of chance, whether it should be as the number of flies on the *punkah* were odd or even!—'Odd for plaintiff,' the Judge mentally resolves—he opens his eyes, looks at the *punkah*, and counts *two flies* against the plaintiff. '*Hookoom hooah ke, udum-suboot men, moqudum-mah dismiss ho.*'* Verily, this man was 'a Daniel.'

* It is ordered, that, owing to want of proof, the case be dismissed.

CHAP. XIII.

BULBUDDER SING PERSONATES A RAJAH ; TAKES A GREAT HOUSE ; AND DECAMPS AT NIGHT WITH HIS PLUNDER.

In my last I hinted at the practice of the *budmashes* of forcing people to give them bonds for sums never lent to them ; and then of ruining them by suing for the amount in the subordinate Civil Courts. I now proceed to notice another abuse of daily occurrence. This is the constant and grinding oppression of the '*phereedars*,'* who are servants of the *budmashes* and usurers, and who go about forcing poor people to give them a portion of that pittance which they earn, literally, by the toil of their hands and the sweat of their brows.

A poor widow supports herself and children by slaving at the *chukkee* (grinding mill) day and night—if that can be called *support*, where the poor creatures contrive, with all their toil, to earn a few ounces of meal, or perhaps, *four pice* a day ; out of which a *phereedar*, who had lent her a rupee five years' back, and who had received back double the sum, continues to demand *two pice* a day ! In vain she pleads that she has repaid him—in vain urges that she must give her children food, even if she herself starve. He throws her on the ground, kicks her, and drags her about, until human nature can stand it no longer, and she faints ! The neighbours hear a noise and run to the poor woman's house, just as the *phereedar* is leaving it. They see her lying insensible and give her aid. But the *phereedar* gives them a hint, that if they dare to give evidence in the matter he will serve them in the same way. The poor widow begs of her neighbours the sum of eight annas to purchase a stamped paper on which alone a petition may be written ; and she begs of some compassionate *Mooktyar* (*a rara avis*) to engross the petition for her, she presents this to the Saheb Magistrate, and with tears and loud cries implores his protection. He orders her deposition to be taken on oath ; and in consideration of her extreme indigence directs that enquiry be made through the police. The *thanadar* goes to the spot, asks every witness what he knows in the matter ? The invariable reply is, that the witness knows nothing. I will suppose the *thanadar* to be an honest man as far as ordinary circumstances are concerned, and that he really intends to do justice in this case. What *can* he do ? The witnesses named by the poor widow turn against her, and the *thanadar* is obliged to report that '*charge is not proven by the witnesses of the prosecutrix.*' Now, how can the Magistrate punish ? Where is the *legal proof* ? The witnesses dare not give honest evidence ! 'Of what use then are laws and legal and police establishments ?' you ask, I

* Vagabonds.

answer, that they are only fit to awe the weak. There is no law that has yet been passed, that a clever scoundrel cannot break through. And thanks to the policy of an enlightened age, *the spread of education* is only enabling the natives to become keener rogues. Every common '*gunwar*'* quotes his '*kantractions*'† and '*surkoolar hookoom*;'‡ and nine out of ten of the hangers-on of the courts know only so much of English as to render them dangerous eaves-droppers.

A common mode of swindling in the city of *Kashee* as practised by the clever *budmashes* is, for one of the party to personate a Rajah on a visit of ceremony to the holy city; while his companions pretend to precede him and hire a stately *huvelee* in '*Dal-ka-Munduvee*,' which they furnish for the nonce. *Bulbhuddur Singh* sits in state as *Rajah Guchpuch Rae*, bedecked in false gems, and dressed in shawls and *kimkhabs* (*anglicè* kingcobs). His retainers go about the city, and entice shawl-merchants and jewellers to the Rajah's house. They arrive with costly wares, and eagerly proceed to expose them; but the Rajah turns an indifferent eye upon them, and declares they are not sufficiently choice for him. The *Soudagurs*§ promise to return next day. In the mean time the song and dance proceed with fierce revelry. Six sets of the best dancing women exert their lungs and limbs, and go through every fascinating movement to delight and amuse *Rajah Guchpuch Rae*. Where is my treasurer, exclaims the Rajah. Bid him bestow a largess of 100. *Ushurfes*|| on these soul-enslaving terrestrial houries. A retainer, after going through the farce of a search, respectfully approaches his Highness, and intimates that the treasurer has not yet arrived. The *nimukharam ! behaeyah !*¶ exclaims the Rajah. Here fellows, see that a proper treasurer be in attendance on the morrow, to whom we shall deliver our treasure and *tosheh-khanah*** The Rajah enjoys himself until no longer able to sustain excitement; and then the *gundrupins*†† retire, and the torches are extinguished.

Next day, there are several candidates for the honor of the treasurer's office, who eagerly offer to serve. The salary is 200 rupees a month, says the Rajah, and I hate accounts; constant attendance and implicit obedience are all I require. After rejecting some, His Highness fixes upon *Lalla Umbeka Sahae*, who receives a well-worn shawl as a *khillut*‡‡ and an immense key. He ventures to ask where the treasury is? And is told to wait until the *huzrut* has leisure to show it to him. In the mean time the Rajah suddenly recollects that he has immediate occasion for 1,000 rupees, and he shouts out: 'Here Bahadoor, take 1,000 rupees from *Lalla Umbeka Sahae* and give it to *Bisheshur Singh*, and be sure to take a receipt for the money. Tell him it is the price of a ring I bought of him for my favourite *Goolbe-*

† Villager.

† Constructions of regulations.

‡ Circular Orders.

§ Tradespeople.

|| Gold Mohurs.

¶ Unfaithful to salt. Shameless.

** Place for keeping valuables.

†† A caste of Hindoo Nautch-girls.

‡‡ Dress of honour.

har. *Bahadoor* asks the treasurer the money. The poor man looks aghast, and shews huge key as all he has received of the *Rajah's* treasure. But *Bahadoor* tells him that *Rajah Guchpuch Rae* never fails to cut off the ears of a disobedient servant. So the hint is taken, and the *Lalla* gives an order on his *Shroff* in the city for the amount. And *Bahadoor* at once proceeds to realise the money. As evening approaches shawl-merchants and jewellers again appear and press their wares on the *Rajah*. They see *Lalla Umbeka Sahae* figuring as treasurer. They are old acquaintances; and they ask him the amount of *Guchpuch Rae's* treasure. In reply to which, he simply shews the key, about a foot in length. The merchants open out their wares to entice the *Rajah*; but he says he will wait until all his things arrive. They offer to leave their bundles for the *Rajah* and his ladies to choose, which is agreed to with apparent indifference. The song and dance proceed as usual until midnight, when, as usual, the torches are extinguished.

Next morning, what a change has taken place. One old man is seated at the doorway, dosing over a *chillum* of *ganjah*. No other sign of life is visible in *Rajah Guchpuch Rae's* palace. The treasurer arrives first, opens and rubs his eyes, and asks the old man where the *Rajah* and his people have gone? He replies, that they decamped before dawn. In due course, the *Muhajans*, the jewellers, and birds of song arrive, but nothing of the *Rajah* is to be found; and smoke-stained walls, and filth, and litter about the rooms, alone betray that revelry *had been* there! The jewellers and *Muhajuns* turn in wrath upon *Lalla Umbeka Sahae*, and tax him with having aided to cheat them. They proceed first to abuse, and then to beat him. In vain the poor man shews the huge key, and laments his thousand rupees lost for ever. They drag him to the *Kotwal*, and charge him with having cheated them; and the defrauded treasurer remains in durance vile for a week at least; and gets off at last, on proving himself to be one of the victims of this system of swindling, and after feeing the police myrmidons pretty roundly.

Who is ever to find out what worthy personated *Rajah Guchpuch Rae*, when hundreds and thousands of travellers are daily passing to and from the holy city?

I happened to be present at a curious decision by a *Saheb* who had magisterial powers. A *Muhajun* desired his nephew to purchase a piece of *kimkhab*. He did so, but cut off a yard for his own use. The *Muhajun* charged the lad with theft. After hearing all parties, the *Hakim* most sapiently ordered, that the *Muhajun* should pay a fine of ten rupees, and his nephew receive ten stripes. "For God's sake, sir," begged the *Muhajun*, "do not inflict stripes on my nephew, for the whole family will be disgraced. And what offence have I committed worthy of fine." The *Saheb* sharply remarked, "That the *Muhajun* deserved to be fined for having a rogue as an accomplice; and the nephew deserved stripes, because he had stolen a yard of *kimkhab*!!!" The order was carried out.

CHAP. XIV.

THE GHATS AT BENARES DURING AN ECLIPSE.

Have any of my readers had the curiosity to visit the ghats during the occurrence of an eclipse of the sun or moon? If not, I would urge them to go once on such an occasion. The living tide that keeps pouring in from all the principal roads into the city some time before the event, is of itself an imposing and interesting spectacle. The human wave, as it rolls along the streets, gains accession from every lane and bye-way, and is at once amassed upon the banks of the holy stream, the *Ultima Thule* of the grand struggle—the eternal hum—the shout—the struggles, as the strong push away the weak to open a passage for themselves, afford a vast field for study to the contemplative. Then, again, the variety of costume, the drapery of every possible hue, captivate the attention of those who delight in the philosophy of dress; but, above all, the enormous crowd brought to a stand still—the living mass squeezed together in a small space, at once conveys to the mind the enormous fecundity of the human species. Contemplate them closely, and if you have been accustomed to read human nature, you will see in every face expressions of the feelings that are ruling within. Philosophers of every shade might, at such gatherings, find subjects for study and instruction. But let me now leave generalities, and enter into particulars.

Look at the crowd, the struggle yonder shows that an official, or a rich native gentleman, is pushing forward. The one is mounted in a tonjon, the other is on horse-back. The troop of people running with switches in their hands are their followers; they are striking the feet of the rabble shouting "*furuk, furuk*;"* but still they cannot penetrate the crowd; the horseman is obliged to stop, and the tonjon is forced up from the shoulders of the bearers above upon the heads of the crowd, with the occupant in a perilous position.

Suppose you have managed to reach the *Munkurnika ghat* in safety. By all means have a boat ready there for your reception; hasten on board, and take an elevated position, that you may compass as much of the spectacle on shore as possible, and drop down the river leisurely. What do you see? A vast concourse of living heads upon the surface of the water, bobbing up and down in alternate succession; and, O! horrors among them, several loathsome corpses gyrating in the eddies made by the bather; nor are they shunned, although the effluvia from them is sufficiently powerful to kill a horse. There a young girl rises from her immersion, and finds a dead body in her arms. She transfers it, without any sign of disgust, to an octogenarian female neighbour, whose charms have long been veiled over by a

* Aside, be off.

net-work of wrinkles, and who now sees an emblem of what she is soon likely to be, but she loathes it not—she passes it on with becoming civility. Now, you see a stout, upright man, the very figure-head of a sepoy, with a manikin, perhaps two years old, seated on his shoulder, holding on like grim death by the hair of his father's head, while the elderly gentleman gives him a dip to his great delight, although not free from the chances of suffocation. Nor are the scenes along the ghats solemn and purely ceremonial. Love has its dominion here also, but in its grotesque and primitive shape. Behold yonder are a group of beautiful nymphs, gracing the chocolate coloured stream like rich lotuses in full bloom. Mark that young man with a smooth brow and athletic frame; he has been viewing the nymphs for some time, he can no longer resist their charms, he dives, now he rises among them; he looks amorously upon them all, and then gravely utters his apology, with mock solemnity—*ushanan kea pushnan nea, to nam lea permeshur ka—bom, bom, bom*. One girl ventures to look at him, and seeing that he is a love of a man, returns a glance of fire, and inadvertently drops a flower; he picks it up, and keeps it as a token. Now, for some fun;—the *chevaliers d'Industrie* are busy yonder. Do you see that group of females bedecked with costly jewels, bathing as if it were by themselves, see that girl taking a dip, a nimble-fingered gentleman dives simultaneously, the nymph rises suddenly *muyah-re-muyah mere nuthnee gye*.* This attracts attention, and the spoiler escapes. You hear another scream soon after, *duyah-re-duyah mere balee gye*,† sure enough her pendants are gone: there stands one with a nose rent clean to the nostril, and the other with bleeding ears. But this is nothing—often has the female entire been carried off for the sake of what she had on her person, and the *mugger*‡ gets credit for the abduction. The riflers are expert divers, and are sure to emerge in a crowd of bathers unperceived, roaring *bom, bom, Mahadeo*, a sort of thanksgiving for the furtive success.

Dropping down, you have a splendid panoramic view of the stone ghats and buildings, the minarets, observatory, musjids, and everything that renders Benares remarkable. You then proceed to *Burna Sungum*, where the crowd is, perhaps, most dense. Here the same farce of ceremonials is going on as elsewhere, and the same plunder is as active as ever under all manner of ingenious contrivances; but this ghat is remarkable for the scene which occurred there some years ago. The river had been insidiously undermining it for several years, and on that occasion the weight of the crowd was more than it could bear, and it suddenly gave way, carrying hundreds and hundreds of helpless beings into the jaws of death. Nor was this all, the alarmed multitude made a retrograde movement, and thousands were crushed under the tread of the panic-stricken crowd. The police

* Mother! O mother! my nose-ring is gone!

† Nurse! O nurse! my ear-ring is gone!

‡ The alligator.

reported that one thousand individuals had perished ! But the officials like to deal with even and low numbers ; it is a convenient way of stripping horror of its disgusting features.

Such events furnish rare opportunities to the gentlemen who live by their wits to practise their dexterity and earn their utmost. Bangles, ear-rings, armlets and nose-rings, disappear as well from the persons of the living as from the bodies of the dead ; females generally are the victims. How the things are carried off, and by whom, is a profound mystery.

One brawny fellow is carrying the body of a young woman, carefully wrapped from head to foot, bewailing the unfortunate and untimely death of his sister. The crowd respectfully make way. He carries her to the nearest unfrequented spot, and lays her down. She is stone dead, and her nose, ears, arms and feet are all stripped of their ornaments. No longer useful to the dead, he leaves the corpse on that spot, and goes to seek for the living ;—a wife, or perhaps, some other female relative ; but where is she ? Alas ! gone. He becomes conscious of another bereavement, and is plunged in the depths of misery ; and perhaps becomes the immediate victim of lacerated feelings. Alas, poor Hindoo ! had you no well of clear water in your vicinity to purify yourself and family with ?

A curious story is yet told of a *dome* who flourished and was finished in the days of "*Junab Willium Welburs Burrud Saheb Bahadoor.*" He was a most expert diver. One day while loitering for prey at the *Munkurnika ghat*, where the family of a rich *Muhajun* were bathing, he espied among them a woman richly decorated with jewels ; in a moment he contrived to get into the river, and after playing about according to his wont, he dived and disappeared ; the jewelled lady also disappeared ; neither the one nor the other was seen to rise again, and her friends were under the impression that some fierce alligator had taken a fancy to her, and perpetrated the elopement. Several days afterwards a devout person who had cleansed himself of his sins in the river, and was just stepping out on shore, accidentally put his foot under a stone step, and there felt something soft. He was immediately filled with suspicions, and communicated his alarm to others. Some *domes* were sent for and the body extricated from its cell ; it was the remains of the *Muhajun's* lady, denuded of all its costly ornaments. Suspicion rested on no one : but the *dome*, who had committed the horrid outrage, was, some months afterwards, detected offering the jewels for sale ; they were recognised as the property of the deceased. The *dome* confessed, and expiated his crime on the gallows.

CHAP. XV.

THE FERRIES, HOW THEY ANSWER A GOVERNMENT MONOPOLY.

The *Ghat Manjhees*, *ghat and ferry thikadars*, and the *Choudhurees* of *hackeries*, or, in other words, the heads of guilds and corporations are, perhaps, as great curses to the community, as any other of the thousand evils under which it groans. Frequently and anxiously the Magistrates have tried to devise plans for the prevention of oppression; but the best concerted schemes have failed, from the extraordinary reverence of "*the dustoor*"* to which the Natives of this country bow with as much deference as they do to their priests. Where proof of oppression can be produced by a complainant, punishment will necessarily follow. But I confess that no *preventive* measure occurs to me.

No boat of any kind puts to at any ghat, or leaves the ghats of Benares, without the consent of the *Ghat Manjhee* and without feeing him. No one can hire a boat, but a per-centage is put on for the *Ghat Manjhee*: *Soudagurs* employ this worthy to procure boats for them; and he puts down his own allowance in the bill, as coolly as if he held a Queen's patent to make the charge. A European traveller applies to the Magistrate for boats, to proceed up or down the country. The Kotwal is ordered to procure them. Even *he* can do nothing without the *Ghat Manjhee*, who furnishes the boats, as well as directs the *rates*, with reference to his own commission. They are in league with the *Churundars*† of boats, and with the servants of *Muhajuns*, to defraud the Insurance Companies. A very common trick is, to unload good boats and let them to *Soudagurs*, and to put the packages or other goods on unsound boats, *after* the boats have been reported to the Agents and passed on. But the grand gains are on extraordinary occasions, when boats are pressed for the use of the army. Then the *Ghat Manjhee* is attended by the *chupprasees* of the Magistrate and the Commissariat officer; and they go about the Ghats, forcibly detaining private boats until fee'd; and even throwing out sacks of grain, to rot or to be stolen, on the banks of the river. If the owner of the boat or of the grain, protests or makes any opposition, he is summarily dealt with, by receiving a sound thrashing; and then of being bundled away to the thanah, as a contemner of authority. If a representation be made to the Magistrate, and he attempt to put down such practices, the *Ghat Manjhee* and police take good care that the proper number of boats are not furnished; and rather than run the risk of detaining troops, a Magistrate is forced to wink at such practices.

The ferries of every large river are annually farmed to the highest bidder, on condition that he keep a sufficient number of

* Custom — A facetious and learned man, proposed that all the gods of the Hindoo Pantheon should be shelved; and the god *Dustoor* set up in their stead.

† Supercargo.

good boats, properly manned, at every ferry. A stone slab is affixed at the principal landing-places, stating the rates authorised by the *Saheb Magistrate*, written in Persian and Nagree; and on proof of any departure from these rates, the farmer is punishable. But it is a universal complaint, that the farmers at the ferries are the greatest extortioners: and who, for the sake of one or two pice, would leave his occupation, or postpone his journey for several days, to prosecute the *ijaradar* for extortion and infringement of the rules? And if a complainant does come forward manfully, to expose a public abuse, he must induce some fellow-travellers to remain also as witnesses. In all cases, judicial proof is difficult to obtain; and the prosecutor is worried and exhausted for his pains—besides being out of pocket.

Some European recruits were crossing the river at Rajghat; and my master, the *Nazir Saheb*, was directed to be in attendance, and to see that no useless delays occurred. I accompanied him, of course. We saw large boats, with about fifty Europeans on board; each worked across the river, merely by the swinging motion of the rudder. On landing the men, the boatman was pushing off, but the *Nazir* called out to me to seize him. I did so. "Where are the three boatmen, you scoundrel, as directed in your pottah?" said the enraged *Nazir*. The "*Gorah log**" so hurried us, that my two oar-men did not come up in time." Upon this, I was desired to give him some gentle admonitions, which I did, in the shape of sundry hard boxes on the face, and some kicks on his "*Western parts*." We watched other boats as they came to the ghat, but in almost all, there was a great deficiency of *danrees*.† "Go, Panchkouree," said the *Nazir* to me, "and drag that fellow, *Gunput Singh*, to me. I will take him before the *Huzoor* and get his *ijarah* cancelled, for thus endangering the safety of the *Cumpanee ka Gora*. I joined in the virtuous indignation of the *Nazir*, and proceeded to *Gunput's* house. "Come in, Bhaee Panchkouree Khan," said the wily farmer, "and take a *chilum* of delicious *ganjah*." But I was not to be caught so easily, and I began to bluster and to threaten to collar the farmer. "Oh! my friend," he said, "have a moment's patience. I had forgot to repay you the five rupees I owe you for a tulwar I bought from you. Here is the money." I felt the full force of his persuasive rhetoric, and pocketing the money, began smoking the *chilum* pleasantly. After a time *Gunput* asked me why he had been sent for? I explained. "Is that all?" he said, "I will settle it at once." He accompanied me to the *Nazir*, and most obsequiously salamed to him. The *Nazir* commenced a volley of abuse, in which kind mention of the farmer's sister and daughter was made. But the farmer of the ferries, without moving a muscle of his countenance, put a little *chit* into the *Nazir's* hand; and it was wonderful to observe the sedative influence of that slip of paper. The *Nazir* and the *Ijaradar* went away from the ghat, I following in

* Europeans.

† Boatmen.

astonishment; and a report was made to the *Huzoor* that the *Gorah log* had crossed over without accident!!

It was during the height of the floods in the month of August, in the year——, that a ferry-boat was observed rushing down the river with frightful rapidity. There were about seventy-five human beings on board; and the water was scarcely six inches from the edge of the boat. There were but two boatmen; one at the helm, and the other at an oar. The boat got into an eddy, and the strength of the boatmen was unequal to extricate her. She went round once, and canted over, head-foremost, and not a vestige of boat or of the passengers was there! The farmer of the ferries was fined for his neglect, in not seeing to the efficiency of his boats. But was that punishment at all sufficient for the loss of so many lives? Surely a case of this kind may be construed into *homicide from neglect*, and should be punishable by several years' imprisonment.

The *Choudhurees of hackeries* are great men in their way, and are the occasion of much annoyance to the lieges. At every "uddah" (or stand), and in every market square, an emissary of the *Choudhuree* attends to look after his master's interests. When hackeries are required by *Soudagurs* and *Muhajuns*, these *Choudhurees* are the parties who provide them. They are rather moderate in their requisitions from the proprietors of carts, and limit their *dustoorree* to only two annas in the rupee—being *one-eighth*! When hackeries are required for the public service, and an order for impressing them is passed by the Magistrate and Commissariat, then is the *Choudhuree* in his glory. Travellers, with their wives and children, are summarily dismounted, and with their property, lodged under the first convenient tree—strings of carts laden with grain, are taken possession of, and the contents lodged on the road-side. No complaints are listened to, and unless *oil of palms* is freely used to slip out of the clutches of the press-gang, escape is impossible. For every ten carts ordered for the public service, a hundred at least are pressed. "Why?" you ask, in your innocence, O happy ignorance! Suppose you have ten good carts with three bullocks to each—the feed of thirty bullocks cannot be less than four rupees a day. Or we will suppose that servants and all come to five rupees a day. Now suppose the owner to be a bumptious fellow who will not fork out. He is trotted backwards and forwards, first to the Kotwalee; then to the Sudder bazar; then to the *Saheb Kumsuriut*. He is not paid a fraction until the troops march; and he may be a fortnight or three weeks, feeding his cattle and his servants "*bakhyr-khwah-i-Koompanee*."* Now the moment he was pressed, had he had the sense to have slipped twenty rupees into the *Choudhuree's* hand, or half that sum into the hand of the *burkundazes*, he would, I conceive, have been a considerable gainer. Do you twig?

* For the good of the Company.

CHAP. XVI.

TARDINESS OF THE COURTS.

Many people have complained, and hundreds do still daily complain, of the tardiness of the Courts. Of the slowness with which the sword of justice falls upon the offending victims, and the uncertainty attending it, whether it shall remain suspended in mid-air, or whether it shall fall on an offending, or an innocent head? I shall endeavour to give my readers a peep behind the curtain, and to show them how and why it is that such business prevail.

It has been my lot, as an *Orderly*, to serve under several *Hakims*, and being of an inquisitive turn, I have watched their modes of procedure with interest; and have, I hope, made profitable use of my observations. One *Hakim* has a *shoukh** of turning every thing *oolta-poolta*.† Nothing that has been proposed or done by his predecessor *can* be right. Nobody *can* take a correct view of any thing but himself. He objects to a time-honoured usage, and asks the spectacled *Serishtadar*,‡ “*Keon kon ayeen ba moojib?*”§ The old man, almost old enough to be his grandfather, stands before the *Huzoor* with folded hands, and replies, “*Zabitaḥ yeh hye, Khodabund, koodamut seh.*”|| “*Zabitaḥ be d—d. Ayeen dekhao.*”¶ Upon this, the case pending before the *Huzoor* is deferred, and *Indexes* and *Guides*, to which the Native cannot have access, because they have never been translated, are consulted; the construction of the regulations, on which the *dustoor-ool-umul* (rules of practice) has been based, is rejected as a false interpretation of the law; and the whole system of local usage is upset, after it had gone on for thirty years. I will allow that the construction of the law *may* have been wrong, yet the mere change of any mode of procedure, after a period of thirty or forty years, is in itself to be deprecated in a people so tenacious of “*dustoor*” as the people of *Hindoostan*. The fault of the administration is, that officials have it in their power to alter the rules of practice as they please. And instead of every *zillah* being governed on uniform principles, the modes of procedure of no two *zillahs* are similar.

Again, there are *Hakims* who are content to look *only* through the spectacles, and to hear *only* through the ears of their *Omlah*. To every remonstrance he replies, “*Never make any enquiries yourself, or you will ruin the case.*” With such an official an unanswerable argument is, “*Zabitaḥ yeh hye.*” Every thing goes to rack and ruin from the *Hakim*’s easy and yielding temper. He shews too much deference to the opinions of his officers; seldom exercises his own judgment; in some instances he has not leisure to do so—in others *he will not*.

* A fancy.

† Topsy-turvy.

‡ Head Native Official.

§ Well! By what regulation is it?
time out of mind.

|| This is the practice, Sir, from

¶ Practice be d—d. Look at the regulation.

Where so much depends upon the *mizzaj** of a functionary, and he has it in his power to do evil or to do good, with but little control over his own actions; of course, the necessary supervision over subordinates must be considered a contingency depending on chance. In some districts it is so *overdone* that the services of the subordinate officials are lost to the State. In others, it is so imperfectly and weakly exercised, that the subordinate officials, in every department, are the *de facto* rulers.

Another cause of the existing abuses is the *uncertain tenure of office* of all Native officials, from a *Serishtadar*, *Kotwal*, or *Thanadar* down to an *Orderly*. Where people have almost unlimited power to do good or to do evil; and they may be turned out at a moment's notice, either for any presumed offence, or from dislike on the part of the *Huzoor*, and when such dismissals are, in reality, final, without the benefit of an unprejudiced hearing on appeal, of course an incumbent must be a fool to allow any moral considerations to check his venality. "Let us eat and drink to-day, for to-morrow we die," is their motto. Accordingly, in forty-nine out of fifty officials, the practice is to *do nothing without a fee*. The greatest vigilance on the part of the *Hakims* will not put a stop to this evil, *while the tenure of office is uncertain*; and I shall mention some of the ways and means whereby money is daily made in the *Fouzdaree*, Revenue, and Civil Adaluts; leaving it to the learned Councillors and the *Hakiman Aleeshan* to devise some remedy for the abuses, which, as an *Orderly*, I have been a witness to hundreds of times.

I think I once heard my master, the *Nazir Saheb*, say that in all cases of dismissal of any subordinate, receiving more than 10 *rupees* per month in the revenue department, a report was to be made to the "*Junab-Aleejah-Saheb Commissioner Bahadoor*." And that there is a positive order from the Court of Directors, that no *Thanadar of police* should be discharged on light and insufficient grounds. The *Nazir* further mentioned, that all dismissals of *Thanadars* were to be reported to the Commissioner of police. "How is it then, *Nazir Saheb*," I enquired, "that *Meer Jubburdust Khan*, your worship's cousin, and *Luloputto Khan* were turned out of their *Thanadarees*, merely from some dislike taken to them by the Magistrate *Bahadoor*?" "I do not know," replied the *Nazir*, "but they appealed to the *Junab Commissioner* of police, and got no redress." "And how comes it," asked *Jubber Khan*, "that *Meer Boorbuck Khan* has been appointed a *Thanadar*, when he is so confirmed an opium-eater as to be never sober? Is there ever such a thing as an *imtihan*† undergone?" The *Nazir* sighed, stroked his beard, and said, "*Ullah Kureem tooee janteh ho!*"‡

In almost all instances, connected with the *Mofussil Thanas*, the *Darogahs* and all the *Burkundazes* are in a plot against

* Disposition.—Temper.

† Merciful God! Thou only knowest!

‡ Trial—examination.

the Magistrate to defer execution of his orders, until they cannot help themselves. In petty cases, after the deposition of a plaintiff has been taken, his witnesses are summoned by *Sub-pœna*. The defendant can afford to bribe the witnesses, or he may bully them to hide themselves. The *Nazir* returns a *kyefut* that the witnesses are "*rooposh*," and the *Thannadar* is directed to apprehend them and send them to the *Kutcheree*. The first thing he does, is to send word to the parties that an order for their apprehension has been received. If the witnesses or the defendant readily fork out, the warrant, after being delayed for a week or two, is returned to the Magistrate with an intimation that the witnesses are "*rooposh*." But suppose the parties do not stump up? Why then, they are forced out of their houses and sent in to the *Huzoor* in the most ignominious manner. Thus, it will be seen, if a defendant can intimidate, or bribe witnesses not to attend, and if he pay the *Thannadar* for their *non-apprehension*, a common case of abuse or slight assault, which should have been decided at once, is spun out for a month, or more. For suppose the Magistrate order that the personal property of witnesses be distrained, even then the same farce is gone through. Perhaps none may be forthcoming; and if distrained, they may not be sold before the expiration of six months. And in all my experience I have never yet heard of the sale of such distrained property.

Again, suppose there is an affray, and the parties are *caught in the very act*. They name exculpatory witnesses, who *must* be summoned. "Why? in the name of common sense, if witnesses can prove upon oath that they were taken while engaged in an affray?" you ask. Because a finding in such cases is deemed by the appellate authorities to be faulty, the case is uselessly prolonged, while the witnesses *drop* in by ones and twos, and they allege that they "saw defendants twenty days ago ploughing their fields all day, and that defendants were, therefore, not engaged in the affray." On being asked what day they refer to? They reply that they cannot tell. What were they doing at the time of the row? They were not there, and never so much as heard of it!!! It is for such trash that the case is deferred, week after week, and if a Magistrate be ever so anxious to do ready justice, he cannot do so, because his order would be reversed on appeal.

CHAP. XVII.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICE.

On occasions of suspicious death, burglaries and robberies, the police are in their glory. A dead *fœtus* is found lying in the middle of a cross road. The *Goraet* (called *go-right*, because he always *goes wrong*) proceeds to the *thanna*, and informs the *Than-*

nadar that a "*laash*"* is found ! that the umbilical cord has not been cut, and that the child must have been purposely and wantonly exposed to meet a fatal end. The *Darogahjee* cross-questions the *Goraet*, and ascertains that a suspicion of an intrigue between *Kulloo Kulwar*, only son of the rich *Sahoo Bhowanee Kulwar*, and *Mosummat Lutchminea*, a young widow, had for some time been current in the village of —. The *Goraet* declared that he was positive the child was their's. "How far is the house of the *Sahoo* from the place where the *fætus* was found?" "Only *five coss Darogahjee!*" "Is *Bhowanee Sahoo* rich?" "*Lakhorupea ka doulut hye khodabund.*"† "The very man," says the *Darogah Saheb*. "Here, *Jubber Khan*, go and bring me *Kulloo Kulwar* and *Lutchminea*, while I send a report to the Magistrate Bahadoor." While *Jubber Khan* is going on his errand, the *Thannadar* sends the putrid *fætus* to the Magistrate, and intimates, "that the practice of infanticide is daily increasing—that the *Huzoor* is aware that "*the turukkee khuah*"‡ has not the power to investigate such charges without an order from the *Huzoor*—that the *Goraet* had given such information as to induce the *fidwee* to believe that he could trace the parties, &c., &c." To this the Magistrate replies—"Make the investigations *husb-i-zabitah.*"§

Jubber Khan brings over *Kulloo Kulwar* and his reputed *Dulcinea* : and they are at once put into the stocks as proved malefactors. But they have not come to the *thanna* alone. A *Chumarin*, an old, withered hag, who deals in drugs and philters, is also brought as a witness against the parties. She swears, that, some nine months back, she was sent for to the house of *Lutchminea*, who asked her whether she could administer any potion to hide the effects of love ! That she, the witness, did give her a powder, for which she received one rupee. But the prisoner, *Lutchminea*, flatly denied that she ever had a child, and alleged her readiness to undergo an examination by midwives. The *Thannadar* has his wits about him, however, and does not think proper to permit an examination. Next morning the old *Sahoo Bhowanee Kulwar* comes over to the *thanna* to bespeak the *Darogahjee's* good offices ; and he ventures to hint that his son is innocent. "What have I to do with that, *Sahoo jee?*" The *Goraet* swears to your son's guilt, and the *Dæe* swears that *Lutchminea* bought a powder from her. I have the Magistrate Bahadoor's *hookoom* to apprehend and *chalan* the parties, and go they shall. The *Kutcherree* is only twenty miles off, and if your son and *Lutchminea* are innocent, of course the *Saheb Bahadoor*, whose justice is as famed as that of the renowned *Nousherwan*, will release them." The *Sahoo* finds that he must bleed, and pour out the contents of some of his beloved money-bags. He accordingly makes a bargain with the *Darogah*, to release his son at once, for one hundred rupees cash. "Very good," says his worship,

* Corpse.

† He is worth lakhs of rupees, your honour.

‡ Hoper for exaltation.

§ According to practice.

"release *Kulloo*." But Mr. *Kulloo* refuses to budge a foot, unless his beloved *Lutchminea* is permitted to accompany him, and old *Bhowanee* is forced by his son to pay fifty rupees in addition for her release. They are released, and go their way rejoicingly; while the *Thannadar* orders a *kullean*, and whiffs away in delight, uttering an occasional *Ullum-dool-illah!** Of course a report is made to the *Saheb* Magistrate *Bahadoor*, that there is no proof against the accused parties—that the *Goraet* is a liar and a *moofsid*† for having implicated *Kulloo* and *Lutchminea*; and that, in the *fidwee's ukhil nakis*,‡ the *Goraet* is deserving of punishment. The unfortunate wretch is suspended by orders of the Magistrate, and is eventually dismissed from service and imprisoned.

A gentleman once ran off with the daughter of a respectable *Moosulman Zumeendar*, one *Loll Cawn*§ (*anglicè*, red ears). The father was indignant, and complained to the Magistrate, and begged that the *Kotwal* be at once sent with a warrant to search the *Saheb's* house for his beloved *Shukkur Lub*.|| A most stringent order is passed by the Magistrate *Bahadoor*. The *Kotwal* proceeds in state, and demands admittance to the house of the *Saheb*. The *Saheb* comes out himself, receives the *Kotwal* very graciously, and begs of him to walk in. A purse of fifty gold-mohurs is slipped into the *Kotwal's* hand, and the *Saheb* tells him, "My friend, you are an honest man, and a man of intelligence, and you have a warrant to search my house for a woman known as *Shukkur Lub*, a daughter of that worthy man, *Loll Cawn*. Search, in God's name; but you need not break open my boxes and almirahs, in which my valuables are kept." The *Kotwal* searches every room; every hole and corner is examined in the presence of the *posse committatus*, and half-a-dozen witnesses from the neighbourhood; but no woman is forthcoming. "Search the beds and the pillows—rip open the *newar*¶ of the beds, shouts the *Kotwal*; "perhaps the woman may be hid there. But nothing suspicious even is found. The *Kotwal* goes away, and reports everything duly to the Magistrate; forgetting, of course, to mention that a purse of fifty gold-mohurs had been put into his hand, and that it was, in fact, at the time of making the report, in a secret pocket in his vest. "Did the *Saheb* actually abduce the girl?" you enquire; "and was she really in his house when a search was made by the *Kotwal*?" To be sure she was. Being a beautiful creature, a pearl of price, the *Saheb*, who was a wealthy *Soudagur*, would have gone to any expense to retain his beautiful *Shukkur Lub*, and she was snugly ensconced in a large clothes' almirah, which was not looked into by the *Kotwal*!

The indigo planters in every district are great sufferers by the trespass of cattle. Indeed, the *Ahirs* commonly take their herds

* Thanksgiving to God.

† Blackguard.

‡ The slave's defective judgment.

§ This is, of course, a gross corruption.

|| Proper name—Sugar-lipped.

¶ Broad tape, with which beds, in India, are commonly bottomed.

into indigo fields for cheap pasturage with malicious intent ; and a body of them, armed with *lathees*, accompany the cattle, to protect them in case of ejection or seizure for trespass ; desperate affrays with the planters' servants occur. It is true that a special enactment for the protection of the indigo crops was passed in 1832 ; but still the planters cannot always obtain redress. The *Thannadars* are either in their pay, and oppress the people for the planters, or they are against them, because they are unwilling to purchase protection from the officials. A curious and laughable story was told me some time ago, which I shall relate for the edification of my readers. A planter was greatly annoyed by the trespass of cattle in his indigo fields. He seized them repeatedly, and sent them to the *thanna* ; but the *Thannadar* was not his friend, and the cattle were invariably released. One day the planter was dining with the Magistrate, and, in the course of conversation, asked whether he could shoot any cattle he found in his fields, without subjecting himself to punishment ? " By no means," said the Magistrate. " Can I maim them, by wounding a limb ?" No, you would in that case be punished." " O hang it, I could dock them, surely ?" " Why, yes, there is no great harm in docking them, I imagine," said the Magistrate. Some few days afterwards the *Thannadar* reported that the *Saheb Godam** had sent in twenty head of cattle, minus their tails. The *thannadar* begged to send them in to the Magistrate for inspection and orders. They were ordered to be sent in with their owners. On the same day the planter wrote to the magistrate and some other friends to favour him with their company at dinner. They went ; the covers were laid, and the soup produced. It was pronounced delicious by all the company, and by the Magistrate in particular ; and all parties went away satisfied with their host's hospitality.

A few days afterwards a summons was received by the planter to attend at the Fouzdaree Court, and to answer a charge brought against him for mutilating cattle. He appeared in person, and after hearing the charge and the proofs, readily acknowledged that he had cut off the tails of twenty head of cattle from the very roots, because he had found them grazing in and destroying his indigo plants. " But good God, sir, what could you do with so many tails ?" " Do, sir ? Why, I asked a number of friends to dinner, and they and I acknowledged that it was not only humanity to remove the caudal appendages which daily subjected them to the severest tortures under the hands of the unfeeling *Ahirs*, but a just retribution for the damage done by them with their other extremity ; and as to the utility of the tails—we had never eaten finer oxtail soup in our lives." The Magistrate laughed heartily, and dismissed the case.

* Owners of factories are so designated.

CHAP. XVIII.

CONSPIRACY TO OVERTURN THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WHICH
ENDED IN A STATE TRIAL, AND AN ACQUITTAL OF THE
SUSPECTED GUILTY PARTY.

The *moghalitah-deehee** of the subordinate officials, of every grade and denomination, is a constant source of vexation to the superior officers of every department, and a general subject of complaint. I have already mentioned a few instances in which dust has been thrown in the eyes of the *Hakims*, and I shall proceed to notice a few more.

The *Nazir Saheb* directed me to proceed to Patna, to make enquiries connected with a revenue defaulter, and by a singular coincidence I witnessed some strange proceedings, which I shall endeavour to describe for the edification of your readers.

In the ancient and well-known city of Patna, there lived once upon a time one *Syud Bakur*, who rejoiced in the honorable distinction of being one of the *Khas Sowars* to the *Huzoor Saheb Magistrate Bahadoor*. He was so highly favoured by his *Nussebt*† and the *mehurbanee*‡ of the *Saheban Aleeshan* that he rose to the *chief Darogah of Shubgushtee*§ in the aforesaid city. A curious system exists of having two Superintendents of police, whose duty it is to go about and to keep the Magistrate informed of the doings of the *Darogahs* of police, and to find out and let the *Huzoor* know the *Nufs-ool-hal*|| of any important *mokudumma*¶ that may be pending. I need hardly remark how very important such an office is, and how greatly a *Darogah of Shubgushtee* has it in his power to influence the decision of any case. Nor how much he has the means of ruining or forwarding the views of any *Darogah* of police. My conviction is, that a Magistrate, who is not readily accessible at all hours to the people under his charge, is unfit for his trust. He should hear every thing that anybody may have to say, but he should never take aught for granted that he hears without proof or strong presumption.

It was discovered by the authorities that a conspiracy for the subversion of the British government was in embryo. For years the flame had smouldered, but the *iqbal*** of the *Koompanee Bahadoor*, and the bayonets of their army, prevented any outbreak in the provinces. The immediate cause of disaffection was the resumption of the *muafee*†† lands. Hundreds of proud Mahomedan Chieftains, who lived in affluence, and who depended solely upon their *muafees* for the support of themselves and their numerous retainers, were reduced to poverty. But matters were not matured—"the pear was not ripe." Yet it was evident that a cloud had come over the prosperity of the *Koompanee Bahadoor*. Their

* Deceit—humbug. † Lucre.

‡ Favour.

§ Night-watch.

|| Actual facts—The pith of the matter.

¶ Case.

** Fortune.

†† Rent-free lands.

arms had met with a reverse in Kabool. The Sikhs were in force on the Sutledge, and threatened the overthrow of the British Government. The Nepalese, secure in their hill fastnesses, and protected by the formidable belt of *Turaee*, which intervened between their country and the provinces of the plain, were eager to measure swords with the *Koompanee*. It was more than suspected that an intrigue was carried on between the Courts of Lahore and Katmandoo; and that they mutually communicated their intentions in regard to the invasion of Hindoostan. The mistaken system of education of the Natives in European literature had prepared hundreds of youths for employment by the Rajahs and Nawabs, whose duty it was to translate the English newspapers to their Highnesses. The tone of the letters of the local newspapers was generally improper, inasmuch as it shewed the Native Princess that the writers freely canvassed the measures of Government and pointed out the weak points of its policy. The military force at every station and in every large cantonment was accurately known through the medium of the local Press. The way in which the Nepalese could act against the British authority most effectively was pointed out by the writers of inflammable articles. Who then can wonder that the Nepalese were intriguing with the Native army, to turn upon their employers? And who can wonder that disaffected parties arrayed themselves to second the wishes of the Court of Katmandoo? Even the Rajahs, who lived under the British protection in the vicinity of Nepal, were suspected of covertly aiding and abetting the enemies of the Government which fostered them.

The principal Agents in the matter were *Khwajeh Saheb*, a wealthy and influential Zemindar—*Shah Gubbur-ood-deen*, a holy Syud, whose influence over the Moosulmans was great, as a *Peerzadah*, or son of a prophet—*Rahut Allee*, a noted forger and *budzat*,* but exceedingly clever, and very much feared for his unscrupulous villany—*Syud Bakur*, the *Darogah* of *Shubgushtee*—and *Moofsidh*, a common regimental Moonshee, then with the — Regiment of Native Infantry. The ostensible grievances were, the general resumptions of *muafee*, and the *messing system of the jails*—the former of which, it was pretended, had deprived thousands of their means of maintenance, and the latter was complained of as a measure to make all persons incarcerated in the jails, “*Christians*.” The Sepoys were egged on to mischief by the Regimental *Moonshee*, by being reminded of the daily-increasing bad faith of their *Feringhee* masters; of their inability to retain their stupendous Empire in India without their aid; and the certainty of any new power making such conditions with them for their general secession as would insure to the sepoy great privileges and high dignity. The Moosulmans were reminded that they were a conquered race—conquered by the “dogs” they still abhorred and despised. The Hindoos were told that the messing system of the jails and the practice of transportation beyond

* Bad character.

seas, as in force among the *Ungrez Bahadoor*, were slow, but sure modes of undermining the time-honored usages of Brahminism. The day fixed for the *denouement* of the plot was the festival of the *Mohurrum*, when the constant noise attendant on the processions would tend to mislead the authorities as to any riot that might actually occur.

But one of the Mahommedan Native officers of the —— regiment, who had only been partially admitted behind the curtain of intrigue, becoming alarmed at the result of the projected insurrection, and fearing also the loss of his snug berth, informed the Major of the regiment of what had been concocting so industriously for months. The Major, like a wary soldier, at once proceeded to the residence of the regimental *Moonshee* and apprehended him and seized all his papers. When these were read, the whole plot was unravelled, and all that remained for the authorities to do, was to order the apprehension of the principal conspirators, and to adopt measures for the suppression of any disturbance that might occur during the *Mohurrum* processions.

But how shall I describe the panic that prevailed among the generality of the English community, who, instead of joining together and acting in concert, were too much frightened to think or act concertedly in adopting remedial measures for the emergency. It was given out, and believed in the station, that the Surveyors and Planters, in the district and in the neighbouring zillahs, had been murdered, and that the troops at Dinapore and its neighbourhood would shortly become subject to the same fate. Extra troops were stationed at the "*Golghur*" (that stupendous monument of the folly and ignorance of a by-gone generation) and the Treasury. The ladies were requested to seek the protection of the troops; and the Subaltern on duty being asked by a lady whether the sepoy's muskets were ready for action; replied, "*Yes, ma'am, they are loaded with large charges to try 'em.*" Reports were rife that the Planters, the settlement Officer, and the Surveyors, in the Chumparun district, had been massacred; indeed the majority of the European residents at Patna were in, what is vulgarly called, a horrible funk. It required but an outbreak, headed by a resolute leader, and the raising of the green standard of the Prophet, to excite a general insurrection, that, in the state of affairs above described, would have ended in a second Kabul tragedy.

The Magistrate issued the most stringent orders for the apprehension of the parties implicated in the papers of the regimental *Moonshee*; but for a while his efforts were fruitless. The usual return of *rooposhee** was made to all the Magistrate's warrants for apprehension. At length *Reket Allee* was taken. As for the *Khwajeh Saheb* his capture appeared to be so doubtful, that the Magistrate went to his house, personally, in the night, and forced his way into his bed-room; but although the bed was warm,

* In hiding.

and it was evident that it had been occupied only just before, yet the *Khwajeh* could not be apprehended. Reader, perhaps you require to be told, that the confidential *Syud Bakur* upon whom the Saheb Magistrate depended in his greatest emergencies, was in the pay of the *Khwajeh* and *Reket Allee*? The holy *Syud* was hereditary Chief of the *Bhurroos*;* (please refer to Shakespeare's dictionary for the exact meaning of the term) and received a portion of the earnings of all the "*birds of song*" in the city of Patna and its suburbs. The *Khwajeh Saheb* had a sister of the *Syud* as a favourite mistress; and whenever the Magistrate ordered the seizure of the *Khwajeh*, *Syud Bakur* managed to give him timely notice to escape. At length, however, all the alleged conspirators were apprehended, and confined separately, and great were the expectations of the whole country as to the steps that would be adopted for their punishment.

While matters were in this unsatisfactory state the *Mohurrum* approached. The "*Katulka-rat*" (night of massacre) is at hand, and detachments of troops are ordered hither and thither to protect the several parts of the town. When, suddenly, a hue and cry are heard "*Dakoo! Dakoo! — telingah ayah; Bhago, Bhago!*"† The detachments rushed as they best could through the crowd, that was flying in every direction, frightening them the more; but where the *Dakoo*s were nobody could tell. Troops were ordered from cantonments, and the greatest fears for the fate of the opium factory, and the European residents in that part of the station, prevailed. The night passed off wearily and sleeplessly, and parties congratulated one another in the morning on their escape from death or ravishment. The houses of the European residents at the station, I am noticing, are situated in small groups along the bank of the Ganges river, and extend over a length of eight or ten miles, and consequently the inhabitants are unable to assist each other in time of need.

But patience, reader, and see what the morrow shall bring forth.

CHAP. XIX.

PROCEEDINGS AGAINST THE CONSPIRATORS.

Next morning there was a gathering together of all the notables, and one eagerly questioned the other as to what he knew, or had heard, of the occurrences of the night? But nobody seemed to know what had originated the panic of the previous evening. Parties went up all the one hundred and forty-three steps leading to the pinnacle of the *Golghur*,‡ and from thence

* Pimps.

† Dacoits!—Dacoits! The sepoys are come. Run! Run!

‡ Round-house.—It was intended for a granary, and a preservative from famine; but it cannot contain one week's supply for the city of Patna; and remains a remarkable monument of ignorance and folly.

anxiously surveyed the whole country round with telescopes, to ascertain, if possible, what was the cause of the secret dread that weighed like an incubus on them. But nothing could be discovered—all appeared in a state of repose. At length, as the morning advanced, *Syud Bakur* reported to the authorities, that a camel had been frightened by the *tom-toming* and firing of the procession, and had rushed into the crowd upsetting right and left all that came in his way. The mob shouted '*Dakoo!*' and a panic spread like wildfire!!!

The fate of the residents of the opium factory still remained to be ascertained, and also of the detachment that had been sent for their protection and that of the Government stores. A Subaltern was despatched on horseback, and on his reaching the godowns, he was agreeably surprised to hear shouts of merriment. 'Hallo! Captain Snooks, how are you all?' asked the Sub.—'Jolly,' said Snooks, 'I never passed a pleasanter night, and trust I may have several more such nights yet. Nothing but broiled bones and beer and billiards all night, my boy. What d'ye-call-'em and I were right jolly.'

But the trial of the conspirators was to come on, and people anxiously waited the decision of the authorities. It was expected that severe punishment would be resorted to, as an example to the whole of Hindoostan. The proofs, as far as I could ascertain from the officials of the Adalut, were, *first*, that letters from *Moonshee Reket Allee*, *Syud Gubur-ood-deen* and *Khwajeh Saheb* were found in the house of *Moonshee Moofsidh*, urging him to the performance of 'the good work'—promises of large reward were held out for the future—intimation that several lakhs of rupees were at his disposal for the work in hand. *Second*, the confessions of some of the native officers, that they had been tampered with by the *Moonshee*, and that an insurrection was in agitation. *Third*, the confession of *Moonshee Moofsidh* himself, that he was a tool of *Reket Allee* and *Gubur-ood-deen Shah*, with whom he had frequent conferences, and who alleged that they were Agents for the Rajah of Nepal, and the influential Zemindars of the neighbourhood.

The *Khwajeh Saheb*, *Reket Allee* and *Guburood-deen Shah*, flatly denied the charges brought against them, and alleged that they had never seen *Moonshee Moofsidh*. They denied the genuineness of the letters found in the possession of *Moonshee Moofsidh*, and alleged that they, as well as the seals, were fabrications. They called the Court's attention to the fact, that in a number of cases which had been tried, and parties implicated on the strength of documentary evidence, the letters adduced in proof had turned out to be forgeries, trumped up by the enemies of the accused, to ruin their fair fame. They loudly and bitterly protested that they had been forced from their homes and kept in durance as felons on, at best, but weak presumption. That the Magistrate had acted with the zeal and ardour of youth, for which he himself was culpable.

All this was openly discussed in the bazar, and, of course, people differed in their opinions. But the general impression was, that the parties were really guilty of a conspiracy; and the knowing ones said, that if they were recognised by *Moonshee Moofsidh*, there could be no doubt but that they would be blown off from a cannon's mouth, as a grand '*moral lesson*' to the world of India, of which Shah Soojah had set an example in Afghanistan. At the same time it was hinted that a sum of twenty-five thousand rupees had been offered to *Moonshee Moofsidh* to fail in the identification, and that a very *hoshyar* and *chalak* *Saheb** was expected from Calcutta to assist in the defence of the conspirators. And that *other modes* of propitiating the clemency and biassing the judgment of the *Saheban Aleeshan* would also be adopted. I could not help wondering how communication could be effected with a prisoner, guarded by sepoy, by other prisoners, who were themselves confined in a mass of brick-work like the *Golghur*. So being of an inquisitive turn of mind, I determined to find out the secret. I made myself very agreeable, and mixed freely with the *Jacks in office*, and in a convivial moment learned the trick. Suppose a prisoner is confined under the bayonets of sepoy, he must be permitted to eat bread. The preparer of food is bribed, and a short note is put into a *chupatee*,† or a sentence is written on a plate, and when the bread is taken up, the prisoner reads what is written, and expunges the characters. A short moral sentence is always a hint to the prisoner. For instance, '*May the blessed Prophet bring you comfort in this bread.*' Or, '*Cheer up, friend! that which is written is written.*'

Well, the trial came on before the extraordinary commission appointed for the purpose. The defendants were all brought up before their worships, and confronted with *Moonshee Moofsidh*. He persisted in his story, that he had had several interviews with *Reket Alee* and *Gubur-ood-deen Shah*, but that the prisoners were not the parties!!! What was to be done? The old woman called by us the *Koompanee Bahadoor*, had been frightened. The *Burra Sahebs* had made a great report to the Council. The safety of the empire was supposed to have been jeopardised. Some of the most influential people of the country had been apprehended—even that paragon of Darogahs, *Syud Bakur* the *nimuk-purwardah*‡ of the *Saheb log*, who was so highly honoured, that the *Lord Saheb ka Miss*§ had taken his likeness; even he was proved to have been in league with the conspirators.

But a very influential *Saheb*, a *burra admee*, had come to make *shifarush*|| for the conspirators. *Syud Bakur* also exerted all his powers as chief '*Bhurooa*,' and mollified the *mizzaj* of some of the *Saheban Aleeshan* by discreetly sending forth his

* Clever and sharp gentleman.

† A flap of unleavened bread, something like a Scotch bannock.

‡ Cherished with salt.
the worthy Syud Bakur.

§ Miss Eden is alleged to have taken the likeness of

|| Friendly or powerful intercession.

sweetest birds of song to warble their dulcet notes in the ears of the *Sahebs*. The result was, that all the prisoners were released *from want of legal proof*.

However, the knowing ones were of opinion that the acquittal of the prisoners was a political dodge; and, under the circumstances, the wisest course that could have been pursued. To have brought conviction home to the prisoners would have been to shew the people of Hindoostan, that the Sirdars and Zemindars, who were fostered by the *Koompanee*, were eager for a change of Rulers—the police officials and the Sepoys of the *jungee pultuns* were unfaithful to their *salt*—that *Moulvee Reket Alee*, and others like him, who had been honoured with important revenue and judicial trusts, were ready to turn upon the *Koompanee's* government, that the conspiracy had been suppressed in the bud, and that the parties implicated were known. And it was good policy to let the world know, that the *Koompanee Bahadoor* did not doubt the fidelity of her army.

REVELATIONS OF THE REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

CHAP. XX.

THE REVENUE SETTLEMENT, AND THE ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY WAYS AND MEANS WHEREBY THE OFFICIALS MAKE MONEY.

I have 'said my say' as to matters in *Fouzdaree*: and shall now give my readers a few revelations in the *revenue* department of the State. This as well as the police, comes home to every man's door. The *Putwarree** system; the *Muhukma Commissioner-koorkee*;† the *Qanoongoes*;‡ the *Suzawuls*;§ the *Tuhseeldars*;|| and *Peshcars*; the *Sheristadar*¶ and his satellites, are all deserving of notice: the *revenue settlements*, and the ordinary and extraordinary ways and means whereby the officials make money, and the zemindars and *putteedars* lose their estates; all these are worthy of prominent mention. I have been myself a humble ryot, and have felt the insolence and oppression of the 'Jacks in office.' I have had the produce of my little field, which, with the labour of my wife and little ones, I had matured and expected to reap, attached and sold, despite my complaints to the *Hakims*. But my office of '*Nazir's Orderly*' has shewn me strange scenes, which it shall be my business to describe faithfully to my fellow-ryots, as a beacon to prevent them from suffering from the oppressions carried on under the sanction of the law, and as a duty to my present employers, the

* Village Accountant.

† Office of Commissioner of Distrainment.

‡ Revenue Officers.

§ Trustee for sequestrated estates.

|| Native Revenue Collectors.

¶ Head Native Official.

Saheb Koompanee Bahadoor, whose *nimuk-purwurdah** I am, from sanctioning them under false colouring. The *Saheban Aleeshan* little dream of the hundreds of ways in which grinding oppression is practised under their very noses. Be they ever so vigilant, they are deceived by the native officials, and it is only by some lucky chance that they stumble upon the practices which pervert the intentions of justice. If they be ever so clear-sighted, they are made to see through the eyes of others. How is this possible? you indignantly ask—Are not the Civil Servants of the Government the élite of England? Are they not some of them acknowledged to be the most talented men of the country? Has not this class furnished some of the ablest Statesmen in the world? All this I acknowledge. But what can they do? I have stood behind the chair of the *Collector Saheb*, and I have seen him absolutely unable to go through the official drudgery of the day. I have seen him defer a case day after day, in the vain hope that he would find time for investigating it thoroughly. But, alas! such leisure could not be found. I have seen his subordinate European officials similarly puzzled with work. How then can you be surprised, that these gentlemen are obliged frequently to let their decisions pass under the force of circumstances they cannot overcome, in order to shew a good *nuksha*† to the Board. Hence, I say, they require promptings from people who are behind the scenes.

I had held possession of my *jote* of five beegahs of land in the village of *Moobarukpoor*, for upwards of fifteen years, and my progenitors had possession for upwards of half a century. We had never paid more than two rupees a beegah, or ten rupees per annum, to our old zemindar. We were protected by the *kawaneen-i-sircar*;‡ which declares that ‘no *khloodkasht*,§ *chupperbund asamee* shall be liable to enhancement of revenue, except in due course of law,’ and I reposed in confidence on the *insaf*|| of the *sircar*. But *Bulbhudder Singh* had purchased the village by private sale; and he had served all the *asamees* with a notice to quit, or to pay four rupees a beegah. I went to the ‘*Dipty Saheb*,’ and gave in an *oozerdaree*;¶ and after hearing both sides, the *Dipty Saheb* ruled that *Bulbhudder Singh* was merely ‘*kibaladar*,’ that as such he was merely a *kaem-mukam* (locum tenens) of the zemindar, and could not legally demand enhancement of rent from a *khloodkasht ryot*. That even were *Bulbhudder nilamdar*, *ba illut bagee*,** he was debarred by Reg. V. of 1812, and Act 1, of 1845, which expressly declared ‘that no auction-purchaser shall have the power to enhance the rate of *khloodkasht chupperbund asamees*.’ ‘Hear him,’ said I, ‘hear him! here is wisdom! Here is a true *ryot*†† *purwur*!’

* Salt-cherished, i. e., supported.

† Report.

‡ Regulations of Government.

§ Cultivators having hereditary right of occupation.

|| Justice.

¶ Objection.

** Auction-purchaser of an estate sold for balance of Government revenue.

†† Cherisher of ryots.

But, lo! no sooner was my field ripe for the sickle, than a fellow put into my hands a dirty bit of paper, with unintelligible Nagree characters written thereon, which he verbally told me was the *Putwaree's wasil-bagee*, shewing that I owed *Bulbhudder Singh* the sum of ten rupees! I could not read; so I took the paper, in great dismay, to a *Lallah* in the next village, and he read as follows:—

Account of receipts and balance for the year 1253 Fusilee, Panchkouree Asamee Mouroosee.

Five beegahs jote, at the rate of 4 rupees a beegah, in all 20 rupees for the entire year.

For the first half year, due 15 rupees—received 5 rupees.

Balance claimed	...	...	10	rupees
Add interest for 15 days...	...	...	0	2 0
Mursoom (dues) Putwaree	..	...	0	0 6
Total due to Bulbhudder Singh...	...	...	10	2 6

(Signed) GUJJUB LALL, *Putwaree*.

Seeing how prompt justice was rendered me by the *Dipty Saheb* on a former occasion, I again waited on him, loudly demanding justice. ‘*Dohae! Dipty Saheb! Dohae Koompanee Bahadur!*’ ‘Fool!’ said the *Dipty*, what are you bawling yourself hoarse for? I can listen to nothing unless you present a petition on stamped paper.’ ‘But, sir,’ I urged, ‘my crops are distressed; my wife and children will starve, unless speedy justice be rendered. And from whence shall I get funds to purchase a stamp, and to pay for engrossing the petition?’ All that I could get for my pains was, to be turned out of the room for my importunity.

But finding no help for it, I sold my *pugree*, and purchased a stamp, and getting a petition written, which I fondly conceived would have melted a heart of stone, presented it next day. The *Dipty Saheb* at once passed an order to this effect—‘the petitioner is at liberty to give security to the *kibaladar* for the amount of distress, or to deposit the money in the treasury; and then to institute a ‘*bejah koorkee*’* suit—ordered that the petition be—‘*dakhil duftur*.’†

‘But, *Junab-i-alee!*’‡ I entreated. ‘I sold my very *pugree* to enable me to present a petition on stamped paper to your honor; and do you call this redress? I ask the prophet to witness that the demand is unjust and illegal, and you desire me to deposit 15 rupees. Where, in the name of the prophet, shall I get that sum?’ But the *Dipty Saheb* plainly told me that he was helpless, and that unless I did as he directed, he could give me no redress. Finding myself *lachar*,§ I borrowed fifteen rupees from the village *Muhajun*, at the rate of four pice per mensem

* A suit for replevin.

† Great lord.

‡ Struck off the file.

§ Helpless.

interest, upon each rupee, or 75 *per cent. per annum*!!! (read this, ye ghosts of usurers and learn a lesson from the unsophisticated mild Hindoo) and deposited the money, and had my crops released for the nonce from the *distress*.

CHAP. XXI.

THE CASE OF THE POOR RYOT.

I had a very moving petition drawn out by *Lallah Seetul Pershad*, commencing with '*zoolm hae layek insaf, wuh jour hae kabil iltifat*.* I set forth, that I was a hereditary *asamee*, and by the *Qawaneen-i-Sirkar* was not obnoxious to enhancement of rent;—that I had a jote of five beegahs of land in *mouza Moobarukpoor*, and had never paid the old zemindars more than two rupees a beegah, or ten rupees per annum, for *malgoozaree*;—that I had paid five rupees, and when the balance became due was ready to pay it;—that *Bulbhuddar Singh*, the *kibaladar*, had wantonly served me with a notice to pay him four rupees a beegah, but that owing to the *insaf-i-nousherwaneet*† of the *Huzoor*, the notice was declared to be illegal;—that notwithstanding, *Bulbhuddar Singh*, whose *budmashee* and *zoolm* were well known to the *Junab*, had levied distress on my fields to force me to pay an unjust demand; and I prayed for justice.

Bulbhuddar Singh's Mooktyar, *Lalla Debee Purshad*, presented a defence, in which he stated that his client was purchaser of the village, and had served a notice to all the *asamees*, under the provisions of Regulation V. of 1812. He quoted several *Nuzirs* (precedents) by which his client was borne out in enhancing the rents, &c. &c. *Gunga Dass, Putwaree*, deponed that he had written the *jumma wasil bagee*,‡ on the score of which distraint of Panchkouree's property had been made—that the account was correct at the rate of four rupees a beegah, and that the sum demanded, viz., 10 rupees, 2 annas, 6 pice, was justly due. I could stand this no longer, and shouted out, '*Ay! Junab-i-Alee!* that man is a liar. He is a *Putwaree*, and every *Putwaree* is a liar. Zemindars have silver rings in the noses of the *Putwarees*, and therewith lead them as they please.' The *Saheb* asked the *Putwaree* whether more than ten rupees per annum had ever been realized from Panchkouree. To which a negative was returned. 'How then do you say that the excess of demand is just?' The *Putwaree* submitted that he acted according to the orders of *Lallah Debee Purshad*. The *Dipty Saheb* decreed for me with costs, and ruling that the distress was vexatious and illegal, released me from the remainder of *Bulbhuddar's* claim. But *Lallah Debee Purshad* was not satis-

* Tyranny is a fit (subject) for justice; and oppression is a fit (subject) for attention.

† Justice worthy of Nousherwan.

‡ Account of receipts and balance.

fied. He asked whether the *Hakims*, whose orders he had quoted, were ignorant of the laws, that their judgments were to be overruled summarily? And the *Lallah* began quoting so many *kantractions* and *surkoolar chittees*, that my liver became as water. But the *Saheb* ordered him to be turned out, and bade me be of good cheer, and to go and reap my harvest. And I did so with a joyous heart, well pleased that I had got the better of both the *Putwaree* and *Bulbhudder*.

But, lo! a month afterwards I was served with a notice from the *Moonsiff's* Court, intimating that *Bulbhudder Singh* had complained against me for the amount of annual *malgoozarce*, praying the Court to authorise his charging me four rupees a beegah; or 20 rupees for my jote per annum. I went to *Seetul Purshad* and asked him to write a petition for me; but he told me that this was a *lumburee moquddumma*,* and that I must consent to undergo considerable expense, and to employ a regular *Vakeel*. I was in despair. I had not a rupee in the world, so was obliged to pledge my pair of oxen to the village *Muhajun* to raise funds for the defence of this suit. But I rested my hopes on the blessed prophet and *insaf* of the *Hakiman-i-Adawlut*.

My *Vakeel* recapitulated the arguments used by the *Dipty Saheb*, and quoted a host of regulations and *kantractions*. But the *Moonsiff* merely asked the *Putwaree* whether the *itilanamah* had been served upon *Panchkouree* agreeably to Regulation V. of 1812? To this the *Putwaree* replied in the affirmative. I myself did not deny it, but produced copy of the *Dipty's roobukaree*, in which the notice itself was pronounced illegal. But the *Moonsiff* threw away the *roobukaree* with contempt—' *Kuon Dipty Kulluctur our kuon Hakim-i-Adawlut Dewanee.*' (Oh ye Gods; Does he pretend to compare the *Dipty's* contemptible intellects with mine!) The *Moonsiff* then asked the *Putwaree* whether the lands of my jote were capable of paying four rupees a beegah, and what were the general rates of the district? The *Putwaree* submitted that my jote was worth five rupees a beegah; that was the average rate of the village. The *Moonsiff* decreed for *Bulbhudder*, casting me, and declaring me liable to pay four rupees a beegah in future. My *Vakeel* advised me to appeal, but I stared stupidly in his face. 'Do not you understand me, friend,' he said; 'appeal to the *Saheb Judge Bahadoor*, and you will be righted. The *Moonsiff* has warped the law from fear of *Bulbhudder*, and the Judge *Saheb* will reverse his decree.' 'Oh! *Vakeel*,' I answered, 'where, in the name of the prophet, am I to get more money to fight with *Bulbhudder*? I have sold my oxen; I have lost my cause; I shall be ousted out of house and home, and you tell me to appeal!' Could appeals be heard without putting us poor *ryots* to ruinous expense, they would be salutary; but as matters are, the *long purse will always carry the day against a poor man*.

* Regular Civil Suit.

I had observed *Bulbhudder* in the Moonsiff's Court, standing alongside his Vakeel. He seemed to be troubled with a curious nervous movement of the right hand across his throat. And whenever the eyes of the Moonsiff and *Bulbhudder* met, the latter invariably put his open hand, edgewise, to his throat. This always made the Moonsiff turn pale and look another way. What the exact interpretation of this sign may be, I know not. But I had lost my cause, and was not particular to ascertain the meaning of signs and telegraphs.

Bulbhudder took the earliest opportunity to sue me before the *Dipty Saheb* for the next *kist*, according to the Civil Court's decree. I appeared in person, and confessed that the Moonsiff had decreed against me, and that *Bulbhudder's* cause was a good one this time. 'Do you intend appealing?' quoth the *Saheb*. 'No, Sir,' I replied, 'I give in, and only pray that my jote may be given to any one else. If *Bulbhudder* will release me of all claims, I will resign my jote.' God and the Prophet know that the *Saheban Aleeshan* have a peculiar mode of administering their own laws. One *Hakim* passes an order to a certain effect, and another passes one diametrically opposite to it. Both fancy themselves to be right; either the laws are *enigmas*, or the administrators are overinstructed in them. God help us poor *ryots*!*

CHAP. XXII.

THE ZEMINDARS AND COLLECTORS.

I showed in my last how I had been forced from my *jote*; and it was in consequence of my distress that I applied to my friend *Suntokee*, the result of which may be seen, by referring to the two first chapters of these revelations.

I observed that I alone was not the sufferer. During my incumbency as an '*Orderly*,' I have witnessed scenes, that if described with ordinary rhetoric, would induce my readers to think that I am not dealing with facts, but endeavouring to harrow their feelings with imaginary tales of distress. I will leave such matters for the ingenuity of romance-mongers, and give you the naked truth, which requires no high colouring to render it interesting. There lived, in the village of *Tandah*, an opulent cultivator, by name of *Bhawanee Singh*. His ancestors had been the *Zemindars* of the village; but during the first revenue settlements by *Joonateen Dunkeen Bahadoor*, his father had refused to enter into the necessary engagements, alleging that the assessments were too heavy, so that at the time of my

* The glorious uncertainty of the law is, perhaps, in no instance, so well exemplified as in the different constructions of officials on this subject of exemption from enhancement of rent. Order upon order has been promulgated; only to render "confusion worse confounded."

story, *Bhawane Singh* was cultivator of fifty *beegahs* of as fine land as you would desire to see for miles around. The *malgoozaree* on these lands was one rupee eight annas a *beegah*, or seventy-five rupees per annum. The *Zemindars* of *Tandah* were also opulent men, and were never a day behind the fixed time for payment of the "kists"* due to the *Sircar*. But the *talooq*† was known to be profitable, and was coveted by the *Vakeel* and *Umlah*; and a plot was entered into between them to force it to be sold, when they would pounce upon it as legal prey, and appropriate it as their own.

It is well known that no native, how rich soever, will pay money the moment it falls due, unless he has the dread of punishment or disgrace before him. It is a practice in the revenue courts of the *Sircar Bahadoor*, to issue dustucks for the *malgoozaree* the very day the kist (instalment) becomes due. This was not done in the village of *Tandah* for three several kists; and the *Zemindar* became careless, and did not pay his next instalment. The *Huzoor* was duly informed of the default. He inquired how the *Zemindar* could be a defaulter when he was known to be opulent; and whether a *dustuck*‡ had been served on him? "Yes, your honour," was the reply. "Here it is, duly signed and sealed." "Serve him with a second dustuck; and direct the *Nazir* also to send a smart *Molazim*,§ to ascertain the cause of *Dowlut Singh's* default." The order was obeyed, and the *Nazir Saheb* despatched me on this service. "Go *Bhaee Panchkoure Khan*," said he, "and bring that *Moofsidh Dowlut Singh* to his senses." At the same time he gave me a knowing look that intimated he had something more to say. I made a great bustle, pretended to start at once, but took myself straight to the *Nazir's* house. Here I found *Moulvee Vageel* and *Lalla Moonshee* waiting for me. They detained me until the arrival of the *Nazir*; and I then received instructions to go to *Dowlut's* village; but instead of bullying him for the rent of the *Sircar Koompanee*, to give him all the best compliments of the *Nazir* and the *Moonsheejee*. "Tell him," said they, "that we are his best friends - that he need not trouble himself about the *malgoozaree*, for that the *Saheb* collector will never find out that he is in balance, while we choose to befriend him."

Well, I proceeded to *Dowlut Singh's* house in *Tandah*, and most affectedly sported my *chuprass*, so that anybody could not fail to observe it, and announced myself as having come from the *Nazir*. *Dowlut Singh* came out in a fright, gave me a *charpae* to sit upon, and anxiously asked "What I had come about?" I was bent upon lining my own purse, so I answered, by telling him "that his *malgoozaree* was not paid, and that the *Saheb* collector had sent me to apprehend him."

* Instalments.

† Estate. The peculiarity of tenure is too prolix for a marginal note.

‡ Warrant.

§ Servant on the regular establishment.

"Where is the *dustuck*?" he inquired. I showed him the notice, with the *Huzoor's* signature, and the broad seal of office. Upon this he appeared to reflect; and after awhile, he said, "You must be tired. *Khan Saheb*, walk in, and I will see whether I cannot make you comfortable." I did so, performed my ablutions, filled my hookah, and puffed away insolently, and expatiated on my influence with the Nazir, and of *Nazir's* and *Moonshee's* influence with the *Huzoor*. "But, *Dowlut Singh*," I said, "you know that *ushraf log** do not exert their influence for nothing. However, thank God, that you do not require our *shifarish*,† for you owe the *Sircar* but a paltry two thousand rupees, and that is as nothing to such as you are, *Dowlut Singh*." But I saw poor *Dowlut* wince; and after coaxing me a good deal, he began to tell me how he, and the *Nazir*, and *Moonshee*, had been on the best possible terms—how he had been advised by them to be in no hurry to pay the kists due to the *Sircar*—how he had expended all the money on his son's marriage—how the *Muhajun*, with whom he had money dealings, refused to advance money without his mortgaging his *taloog*. "And now, *Khan Saheb*, my hope rests with you, and your influence with the *Nazirjee*. Here is a small sum for *pan-tumbakhoo*."‡ I looked at the money, and to my disgust it was only five rupees. So I indignantly threw it down, and rising as if to go, I said, "*Salam Thakoorjee*, I shall inform the *Huzoor* that you refused to come with me." *Dowlut Singh* hastily ran and laid hold of my hand, and bade me sit down. His little son ran into the *suhun*,§ where we were seated, and I saw a *kuldar ushurfee*|| which was hung round the boy's neck, and remarked how well it looked. The old *Rajpoot* took it from his boy's neck, and put it into my hand, with a knowing look, as if deprecating any refusal. I took it, stroked my beard, and enlarged upon my official influence.

Having thus cleverly secured about four months' pay, I turned on another tack, and told *Dowlut Singh* that the *Nazir* and *Moonshee* had confidentially desired me to communicate their sentiments to him. I then gave him all the "*soft sawder*" I could think of, and left him, quite assured that he need not trouble himself about his *taloog*, and the *malgoozaree* due to the *Sircar*. I informed the *Nazir* and *Moonshee* of the success of my mission; but, of course, said not a word about the goldmohur.

The Collector was informed of *Dowlut Singh's* back-sliding; and after wading through the *nathee*¶ of papers, and satisfying himself that the notices had (*apparently*) been served, he made a report to the *Sudder*, and obtained leave to sell the *taloog* for the balance due to Government. In the days I mention, sales were not so scrupulously conducted as they now are; and poor *Dowlut* was not aware of the impending calamity

* Respectable people.

§ Entrance, verandah.

† Good word.

|| Old gold Mohur.

‡ Betel-nut and tobacco.

¶ File.

until one day before the sale. He rushed into the *Kacherree* and protested to the Collector that he had never been served with a single notice; and plainly charged the *Moonshee* and *Nazir* with corruption and *fussadh*.* “Bring the *misl*,” coolly said the Saheb. It was brought, and the Collector *Bahadoor* himself turned over the pages. “Here are the *dustucks*, *Dowlut Singh*, and your signature duly affixed. Call the *mushkooree peadahs*.”† They came and swore to having served the *dustucks*. “Sir,” said the *Nazir*, “I sent *Panchkouree Khan*, a *molozim*, to bring the defaulter, and here is his *kyfeut*.” I was sent for, and no sooner did I appear, than *Dowlut* roared out, “*Ay! dhurmoaotar!*‡ that is the blackguard who brought me a message from the *Nazir* and *Moonshee*, not to pay the revenue, and he fleeced me of a gold-mohur.” I looked sternly at *Dowlut*, and quietly submitted to the *Huzoor* that the man was mad! I call the blessed prophet to witness, *Junab-alee*, that I did not so much as get a drink of water in the village of *Tandah*, and that I took some pieces of bread with me which I ate! If the *Huzoor* will listen to such calumny, how can the servants of the *Sircar* be safe? Here the whole of the officials present hummed forth a similar complaint. The Collector was in despair, and ordered the sale to take place next day, if the entire balance were not paid.

Suffice it to say, that the money was not paid—that the *taloog* of *Tandah* was sold, and purchased by *Lalla Moon-shee* and *Moulvee Vakeel*. That *Dowlut Singh* appealed to the *Alee Jah Commissioner Bahadoor*, but could get no redress, as the papers were right, and that the auction-purchasers got possession. The next chapter will show what they did, and how *Bhawanee Singh* was dealt with.

CHAP. XXIII.

OPPRESSION OF THE RYOTS.

No sooner was the sale of *Tandah* concluded, than *Moulvee Vakeel* obtained a *kibalah*§ and *umuldustuk*|| and took formal possession. Notice for enhancement of rent was served on every *ryot*, and among others, *Bhawanee Singh*, and his fifty *beegahs* of *mouroosee jote*,¶ were not forgotten. He had always paid one rupee eight annas, per *beegah*, and was now directed to pay five rupees. But he was a tough old *Rajpoot* and merely laughed the notice to scorn. However, *Moulvee Vakeel* was not a man to give in while a quirk or quibble was at hand, or a sheer face of brass could frown forth withering terrors; so as soon as the first *kist* became due, he instituted summary process

* Malice – conspiracy.

† Oh! merciful Avater (of God).

|| Warrant for putting in possession.

† Men hired for an occasion.

§ Deed of sale.

¶ Hereditary culture.

against him. The case was prepared by the *Umlah*, and heard before the *Saheb Shistant*, who had recently joined.

There were, first, the *Putwaree's wasil bagee*; second, copy of the notice served on defendant, declaring him liable to pay five rupees her *beegah*; third, the Collector's *kibalah* to the auction-purchaser. To all these, old *Bhawane Singh* simply referred to the fact, that he was a resident hereditary cultivator, from the cession of the province to the *Sircar Koompanee Bahadur*—that he held a *pottah* signed by the *Saheb Kullan Joonateen Dunkeen*—that by the regulations of the *Sircar*, he was exempt from enhancement of rent—and that, please *Ramjee*! he would not pay a fraction more than he had done. While the *Saheb Shistant*, sate with a becoming gravity, with his beaver hat knowingly cocked on his head, Moulvee Vakeel eagerly said, ‘*Junab-i-alee*! did your honour ever hear such insolence as has been uttered by that fellow? He says he will not pay a pice more than the *Malgoozaree* he has paid, even if your worship order it!!! He presumes to defy the *Hakim*!’ ‘Well, well,’ pettishly said the *Saheb*; “*choop ruho*.* What are the sale-regulations, *Moonshee*?” Now the reader will remember that the *Moonshee* was a joint proprietor with the Vakeel; and his cue, therefore, was to mislead; so he turned up Regulation V. of 1812, Sec. 9. “Here, sir, is the kanoon. Moulvee Vakeel did serve the notice for enhancement of *Malgoozaree*, and is clearly entitled to decree in the present suit.” Decree for plaintiff was given accordingly. This is grand, thought old *Bhawane Singh* “*diggruee to pah, lekin roopyea to mor pase bah*.”† After a month the decree was executed, and the usual process for apprehension of the person was issued. The *Mushkore* that served the writ, was thrashed soundly by *Bhawane's* three sons, who were taken up for the assault by the *Thanadar*; and *chalaned* and sentenced to six months’ imprisonment each, and old *Bhawane* himself, heart-broken and disconsolate, delivered himself up to the *Nazir*. The case was called, the decree read, and *Bhawane* asked whether he would pay the amount? “No, I will not,” was his reply. “For fifty years my father and I have never paid more than one rupee eight annas a *beegah*, and not a pice more shall I pay.” He was sent to jail. Moulvee Vakeel next gave a petition to the *Saheb Shistant* for the sale of *Bhawane's* property. This was ordered of course; but it was strange that six fine cows, two stone sugar mills, and a stack of grain, were sold for only eighteen rupees. The sale was sanctioned; but as the whole amount of decree was not paid, old *Bhawane* was, therefore, allowed to rot in jail.

When the next instalment became due to the auction-purchaser, a summary suit was again filed to the usual processes, the return of the *Nazir* was “*rooposh*.” But the defendant and his sons were in jail; how then could the suit be defended?

* Be quiet.

† He has obtained decree, but the rupees are in my hands.

The result was, an *ex parte* decree for Moulvee Vakeel. This decree was also executed ; and the *Nazir's kyfeut* was, that the defendant was in jail in a suit of the decree-holder, Moulvee Vakeel. He was sent for from the jail ; but pleaded insolvency, and was released.

Bhawanee was at large—his sons also were released ; and they commenced ploughing their fields like men. They vowed that Moulvee Vakeel should rue the day he ever thought of oppressing them. Old *Dowlut Singh* and his stalwart progeny were also paupers ; and in the whole village a feeling of hatred and revenge was engendered against the *Nilamdar*.* But the *Moulvee* was not one that would rashly venture his person within a village, the inhabitants of which were inimical to him ; and he laughed at the deadly threats of the tribe of *Rajpoots*.

He sent his *Karindah*, however, to *tuhseel*,† and on the first night of his arrival at the *chownee*‡ it was fired ; and he and his party were knocked down with *lattees*, as they ran out to escape the devouring flame.

This was what the Vakeel had longed for and had anticipated, and he smoothed down his beard with the hand of satisfaction, and prepared to act. Meantime, *Dowlut Singh* and his stalwart sons, and old *Bhawanee* and his sons, were so alarmed at their own violence, and frightened for the consequences, that they left their homes and fled. A very exaggerated report was made to the Magistrate, of a case which required no colouring to heighten its enormity. The wounded men were sent into hospital, and weeks passed before they were declared to be convalescent ; the defendants were not forthcoming until they were proclaimed as outlaws, when they made necessity a virtue, and gave themselves up. They were tried, fully convicted, and sentenced to imprisonment for seven years. Thus Moulvee Vakeel got possession of the entire *talooq*, at the expense of a few broken bones to his retainers.

This result made a serious impression on me. I reflected that my own case was not parallel in hardship. For here were zemindars and old *istimraree puttadars*§ turned out of their fields, and irretrievably ruined in purse and reputation, by the machinations of a man who had risen from the dregs of the people to be a Vakeel ; by the sheer force of villany, aided by, it must be confessed, great talent. Here were the well-meaning regulations of a Government that would be paternal, misconceived and distorted, to suit the views of interested parties. And the *Hakims*—what were they doing ? Alas ! I saw, by my own practice, that they were as children in our hands ; their various duties so interfere one with another, that a portion only could possibly be performed.

But there is such a thing as retributive justice even in this life. Moulvee Vakeel managed to keep possession of the en-

* Auction-purchaser.

† Realise rents.

‡ Village office.

§ Holder of leases in perpetuity.

tire *taloog*, to the exclusion of *Lalla Moonshee*. The latter worthy did not dare to contest the matter with the former, for fear of exposing his own share in the nefarious practices that have been related. The two foul animals hunted in couple, while there was prey in view ; but as soon as it was captured and consumed, the strongest fell on the weak one and devoured him.

CHAP. XXIV.

THE MOCKERY OF AN ADJUDICATION.

Most of my readers are aware that “ *summary suits*” for rent or replevin (known as *moquddummat sursurree*, or *bejah tulbee*) are heard and decided by a Covenanted Assistant to the Collector, or by the “ *Dipty Saheb*.” But, perhaps, all are not aware that the proof in such cases is based entirely upon the *Putwarees** accounts. For any claim that is doubtful, the parties are referred to the civil courts. But as no witnesses may be examined, the *Putwaree* has it entirely in his power to depone for *zemindar* or for *ryot*, exactly as his own interest may bias him. He produces a *Jummabundee*† and the village accounts, which are confessedly dictated by the *zemindar* himself. He asserts that the *ryot* owes the *zemindar* so much money, and has not paid it, *because it is not mentioned in his accounts!* while the poor *ryot* calls his *deotas*‡ to witness for him, and names the *Muhajun* to whom he pledged his bullocks for that money to pay his rent; and he names witnesses in whose presence the money was paid. But the inexorable *Dipty* merely asks him “ *Putwaree yah zemindar ka ruseed rukhteh ho?*”§ “ *Nuhee, ryot purwur!*”|| Decree for plaintiff is the certain result. But who shall blame the Assistant or Deputy, when they are so desired to do, and are forbidden to make aught approaching to judicial investigation? The *jummabundee* itself—the principal, if not only documentary evidence in suits for rent or replevin—is a tissue of falsehoods and errors. Pick out any one, or a dozen at random, and try and reconcile the discrepancies. You will find the same number of the field, the same *jumma* and area, put down against two or three distinct *asamees*, in the same number of distinct entries. “ *Why?*” you ask. “ *Merely to enable the Zemindar and Putwaree to charge one or the other party with the malgoozaree, according to the necessity of the occasion.*” “ *But is there not an establishment of Deputy Collectors, Tuhseeldars, Qanoongoes and Mohurrirs, to examine records and to rectify errors, wilful or unintentional?*” “ *True; but how can one man set through the work of four?* The comparison is slurred over, and the people suffer.”

* Village accountant.

† Register of holdings.

‡ Deities.

§ Do you hold the receipts of Zemindar or Putwaree?

|| No, cherisher of the ryot.

But to illustrate my allegations with a tale—"There lived in the village of *Bhurturra* one *Ramkishoon Koonbee*, who had a *jote* of seven *beegahs* of land, which had devolved on him as his inheritance. He was industrious and prosperous, and always paid his rent of twenty-one rupees per annum to *Bulbhuddur Singh*, the *Nilamdar*, *Ramkishoon's* sons had grown up, however, and leaving two of them to manage the fields, he, with one son, took service with the Rajah of Bettiah. They had been absent two years at the period of my tale. A *beegah* of land that had been left fallow, was about to be ploughed by *Ramkishoon's* sons for sugar-cane, when *Debee Lalla*, with five strapping *lattheals*,* forcibly stopped them, and ploughed the field themselves. On the lad's remonstrance, *Debee Lalla* told them that their father had been dispossessed two years ago! They were too weak to fight, so went to another of their fields, and commenced tilling it vigorously. A year passed away, and *Ramkishoon Koonbee* returned to *Bhurturra*; and his sons told him the story of their dispossession from part of the *jote*. The old fellow's blood was up, and he filed a petition in the *sursurree* for *bedakhilee*.† The *Putwaree* was summoned, and deponed upon oath to the dispossession of *Ramkishoon* from his entire *jote* three years ago! that *Ramkishoon* had fled from his village; and that the *Nilamdar* had made a *bundobust* of the seven *beegahs* of land with *Ramdeehul Singh*, who had paid the *malgoozaree* regularly. Great was the horror of the poor *Koonbee*. He produced receipts given to his sons for the money they had paid the *Karindah*, *Debee Lalla*. He swore that he was in possession of six *beegahs* of his old *jote*, and begged of the *Saheb* to look at the accounts. This was done; but lo! the past two *jummabundees* bore the name of *Ramdeehul Singh*, as cultivator of the fields formerly held by *Ramkishoon Koonbee*. What could the *Saheb* do? *Ramkishoon's* case was dismissed, and he was referred to the civil courts for redress."

Here was a poor cultivator, resident and hereditary, dispossessed first of one field by force, and then of all the rest, by an unscrupulous *Nilamdar* and a rascally *Putwaree*. Had the *Qanoongo* first reported to the *Huzoor*, that an entry in the *Jummabundee* had been made, contrary to the preceding year's papers, an enquiry would have been ordered, and the false entry corrected. But the more inaccuracies there are in a *Jummabundee*, the greater is the fee demanded for filing it; and if the *Douceur* be sweet enough, there is never any difficulty in getting the *Huzoor's* signature affixed to it. Even enquiries made in person by the *Hakims*, and on the spot where a dispute exists, do not always tend to elicit the truth. An officer of experience, and one who could see through a mill-stone as well as most of his neighbours once had a case pending before him, in which, the question at issue was the hereditary right to a grove

* Men armed with clubs.

§ In the summary department, for dispossession.

of mangoe trees. The *Saheb* ordered his tents to be pitched in the disputed grove, and proceeded thither. He observed some villagers with loads of wood on their heads, and others carrying grass, passing close by his tents. "Here, fellows!" he exclaimed, "come hither." But they threw down their loads and ran, as if for their lives. The *chupprasees* of the *Huzoor* pursued and brought them back. "What made you run away?" angrily asked the *Saheb*. "From fear of your worship," they replied. They were then asked "if they knew to whom the grove of trees belonged?" They replied, "that the trees were planted by *Jeet Singh*, grandfather of *Ishwur Singh*, one of the parties; and that all the world knew that *Ishwur* was in possession."

Now the truth was, that the witnesses were purposely sent through the grove by *Ishwur Singh*, who in reality had no right to the grove of trees, nor was he in possession thereof. But the *ruse* told, and the *Saheb* decided for the clever rogues. He recorded, that he had learned from "*hur ek rahgeer, jo ittifaqun oos raste jata tha!*"* that the grove was the property of *Ishwur Singh*; and decree was given accordingly.

The filing of the *Putwaree's* papers is a tax to the entire district; and when the *Saheban Borud* issue stringent orders to the Collectors to expedite the delivery of the papers, then comes a glorious harvest to us orderlies. The *Dipty* sends first one dustuck upon the *Zemindar* and *Putwaree*, then a second, and a third. They are at length brought before the man "in a little brief authority," and the culprits tremble for the result. "Has the *tullabana* been paid?" "No, your honour." "Then put the *Putwaree* in the *Nazir's* guard; and place an extra *peadah* on the *zemindar* until the *tullabana* has been paid." The *zemindar* alleges that the *peadah* only served him with the notice four days ago; but he is turned out summarily. He offers to pay whatever is demanded; but the *peadah* coolly asks *ten rupees*. This is refused indignantly; but every day the bullying increases, and the extra day's *tullabana* is added to the first demand, until the *Zemindar lachar*, gives the *peadah* all he demands, to get away to his quiet home, far from the harpies of the *Kacherrees*. But what is the law? There is no penal law by which the *zemindar* may be coerced to file the *jummabundee*. The only punishment the law contemplates, is to debar any *Zemindar* the privilege to sue for his rent in *any* court, if the *jummabundee* is not filed; and yet each village is mulcted from five to ten rupees per annum; and a parcel of vagabonds, called "*mushkooree peadahs*," fatten illegally on the villagers. In every district where the *Putwaree's* papers are filed regularly, and before the beginning of the year, a legion of these *mushkoories* is let loose upon the *Zemindars*, to force them to do as the *Saheban Aleeshan* desire.

* From every passer-by, who, accidentally, was going that road.

CHAP. XXV.

EUROPEAN AGENCY EMPLOYED BY GOVERNMENT IS INCOMPETENT
FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE REQUIRED FROM IT.

A *Mahajun* had purchased the village of *Bahadoorpoor*, and his *Karindahs* suggested that by doubling the rents of every cultivator, he would get a clear profit of a hundred rupees per mensem. How was this miracle to be effected? You shall see. A *jummabundee* was given to the *Qanoongo* to be filed in the Collector's office, but the increase shewn was so alarming, that he did not dare to attest it. He gave a *kyfeut* to the *Huzoor* to the effect, that "there was an increase in the *jumma* certainly, but that the *nilamdar* alleged that the *asamees* had agreed to the enhancement of rent on his consenting to dig wells, etc., for them." The *Saheb* ordered the *Qanoongo* to go out himself to assemble the *asamees*, and to report faithfully whether they had really consented to the increase? And if so, to get the signatures of the majority affixed to the *jummabundee*. This was pretended to be carried out, and a month had not elapsed when the *Qanoongo* again presented the *jummabundee* with his *kyfeut* to the *Huzoor*, asserting that the names of all the cultivators had been affixed to the document in the presence of himself and the *Putwaree*. What could the *Saheb* do? The *jummabundee* was signed and sealed, and ordered to be filed among the records.

In such cases, the *dodge* is to realise what sums may be recovered from the *ryots*, without instituting *summary suits* or distraining the property of any defaulting tenant; the object being to establish a confidence among the *asamees* in the *jummabundee*, while the fictitious *jumma* is being worked into substitution. Well, two years roll away, and just as the standing crops are fit for the sickle, the cultivators are astonished at receiving notices of distress, and to their disgust, every man finds his *malgoozaree* doubled. Half the inhabitants rush into the Collector's presence, crying out that their crops are ripe, but that the *nilamdar* will not allow them to be cut. The *Saheb*, to get them away, orders the *Peshcar* to compromise the matter in dispute. The *Peshcar* is too great a man, however, to go out that day—but a week afterwards he proceeds to the "*chhaonee*" of the village, and gets well feasted by the *nilamdar*. The *ryots* are brow-beaten and abused, and the *Peshcar* even lends his myrmidons to assist the *nilamdar* in annoying the people. They leave the village in despair; and again the *Saheb* Collector is assailed with cries of "*Dohae! Collector Saheb, Dohae Koompanee Bahadoor!*" But on enquiry, it appears that the *Peshcar* has not returned from his investigation; and all that can be done is to issue a stringent order to the *Peshcar* to expedite his enquiries. At length, the *kyfeut* of the *Peshcar* is given in to the effect, that he had carefully examined

the village account of the *past two years*, and had found that the *nilamdar* merely wanted his just dues from the *ryots*; to realise which he had distrained their crops. The *Saheb Bahadoor* was very busy, and the cultivators were directed to give *malzaminee* to the *Commissioner Koorkee*, and then to institute "*Bejah Koorkee*" suits. Now, in all these orders, strict attention, in conformity with the regulations, was paid, but the villagers, tired and disgusted at the dilatoriness of *summary* proceedings, left the *Kacherree* in despair, and made a compromise with the *nilamdar*!!

A *ryot*, even well to do in the world, can with difficulty find money-security for twenty-five or fifty rupees when his crops (upon which he depends for support) are under distraint; a poor man, under such a calamity, *must* give in to his landlord, or be ruined, in spite of the vigilance and extreme desire of the *Hakims* to render justice.

I have attempted to shew that it is quite in the power of the *Qanoongoes* and *Putwarees* to falsify the village papers according to their own wishes, or the instigation of the parties by whom the doing so is made profitable to them. Let the *Saheban Aleeshan* call for *kyfeut* from the first, or examine the latter on oath, they will find that the *whole truth* cannot be extracted from them. It is only when such officers as Mr. O—— and Mr. M—— have leisure to make the investigations themselves, that I have seen the truth dragged out as if with cart-ropes. I shall mention a case in point.

Lalla Lukhmee Lall had been a Government *Vakeel*, and had contrived to acquire considerable landed property, besides a large sum of ready money. At a sale, ordered by the Civil Court, he had purchased the rights and interests of *Goorbuksh Singh* in the village of *Guhora* for a very inconsiderable amount. By applying golden spectacles to the eyes of the *Qanoongo* and *Putwaree*, he managed to get his name entered as "*auction purchaser of the rights of Goorbuksh Singh Lumbardar of Guhora.*"* Now, it so happened, that the *Lumbardar's* name only had been entered in previous *jummabundees*, and the *Lalla* as purchaser of his rights, naturally took his place. The other sharers of the village alarmed, petitioned the Collector to cause their names also to be entered in the *jummabundee*, but the *Putwaree* and *Qanoongo* declared that their names were not in any previous years' *jummabundee*, nor in the *Putteedaree's statement* or "*Wagiboolurz*" of the *Mohtimin Bundobust*.† The papers were duly examined; and as the name only of *Goorbuksh Singh* was found therein, the *Saheb* disallowed the objections raised, and ordered *Lukhmee Lall's* name to remain as sole proprietor. It was only by undergoing a ruinously expensive law-suit, that the poor *Putteedars* gained their rights. You ask, naturally, how it happened that the several sharers failed to have their names recorded in the Collector's books? I will tell you in a few words,

* The party who pays the Government revenue into the treasury.

† Settlement officer.

There are two brothers, joint-proprietors of an estate. They live in perfect harmony, and the name of the elder only is recorded as proprietor. The younger dies, leaving six sons, who of course, are entitled to one-sixth share each of their father's share. But they have always seen the estate managed by their uncle, and they will not interfere with the old man. Calamities of season occur, and the lads require money for their marriages, and a *Muhajun* is thought of. The emissaries of the *Lalla* recommend their Master as a considerate man and an *ushraf*, and he lends the old man money. The *Lalla* prosecutes in a court of law, in which he is an influential member himself—gains a decree—executes it—sells the rights of the old man, who was the sole *recorded* proprietor—buys them himself, and gets his name recorded in the government register. Now, the *Putwaree* and *Qanoongo* knew very well the exact state in which matters stood; and had they been honest men, and done their duty to the people and to the State, so serious an error as has been noticed, could never have happened. The dispossessed *Putteedars* did get redress, it is true; but after an expenditure ruinous to their purse, through a tedious litigation and endless appeals, sufficient of themselves to cool the courage and energies of most men.

And after obtaining decrees from the Civil Courts, what use are they in nine cases out of ten? The *diggureedar* petitions the court to distrain cattle belonging to A. Immediately B. comes forward, and proves his possession; and although they are full-brothers, and collusion between them is manifest, yet the cattle are released. Another party sues for sale of a *Nuwab's* property consisting of houses and lands. His wife at once objects on the score of their being part of her marriage-dower! Her Vakeel produces the deed of settlement, and the property is released. In short, if the Legislative Council and the Suddur Courts had endeavoured to devise a means to harrass decree-holders, and to give them only "*the shells of the oyster*" for their speculations in matters of law, they could not have hit upon a more ingenious mode than confirming to them the present rules of practice, as regards the sale of property in execution of decrees.

CHAP. XXVI.

THE KOMMISHNUR KURKI.

The *Qanoongo* fattens most when it is the misfortune of any village to be made "*Kham Tuhseel*,"—i. e. where the *zemindar* becomes a defaulter, and no person offers to take a farming lease for a term of years and pay the balance; the Collector appoints a manager on his own part, called a *Suzawul*, to collect the rents,

and in most cases the *Qanoongo* is chosen to fill this office. The first thing done, is to go to the village, assemble inhabitants, and ask for the *nuzurana* (good-will offering) for the *Sircar*. Nothing but silver is ever taken from the majority, but the *Suzawul* is content to commute the cash payment to the offering of a fat sheep. As soon as the sheep has been digested, the *asamees* are again summoned to adjust the new *jummabundee ba-moejibi hookoom Saheban Borud*.* The *Brahmins* are let off, lest they should curse the *Lalla*; but from every other caste, from 4 annas to 8 annas a beegah is rigorously exacted. As these sums are intended for the *Suzawul's* private purse, they are from a mere infirmity in the memory, omitted in the village accounts. The *zemindar's* dues are always enforced by the *Sircar's* representative. The shepherds present the younglings of their flocks; the barbers shave him, and sooth him to rest, or gently arouse him by the delicious pressure of the limbs known as *shampooing*; sometimes the young *Nayins* (barberesses) take the place of their husbands to lull the *Suzawul* to rest—the *Telees* furnish sufficient oil for a lamp to burn throughout the night—and thus a *Suzawul*, in charge of a large estate, is the picture of a happy man in the enjoyment of rural felicity and rural affluence. Many a feast do his friends receive at the expense of the villagers, and who would not feast, “eat, drink, and be merry,” when all the material cost nothing? A case comes on before the *Saheb Collector*; the *Qanoongo* is ordered to attend. He cannot be found. Where is he? Nobody can tell. The *Nazir* roars out to me, “Go, *Panchkouree*, and bring that *Suhalinkar*,† that *Nimukharam*,‡ to the *Huzoor*. Go to his house; and if not there, go to the village of *Sundaha*, where he may be playing the *Suzawul*.”

There is a trite saying, that “experience maketh fools wise.” I should, when I first took service, have girded up my loins, and gone in search of the *Suzawul* at once; but I reflected on the inutility of hurried measures; so I went to my own house, ate a good dinner, rested comfortably, and departed next morning to search for the *Suzawul*. I went to his house, but the inmates had not heard of him for several days. I then proceeded to *Sundaha*, and while yet a good way from the *Chhaonee*, heard the music of a *Seringee* § and the screeching of a “*Ramzanee*.”|| I boldly made up to the assembled company, and inquired for the *Suzawul*. There was the fat *debauchee*, with a *hookah* in hand, indolently puffing and gazing on the “charming nautching damsel,” and now and then varying the monotonous gravity of his deportment, by a nod or a yawn. He appeared intoxicated with *bhung*, and the flashes of light from the *Ramzanee's* eyes; utterance had forsaken him, although the time was barely past noon. “*Wah! Wah!* ¶ *Qanoongojee*,” I said; “the *Huzoor* remembered you yesterday; and since no person could tell whither you had

* Register of holdings, according to the orders of the Board of Revenue.

† Shirker of duty. ‡ Unfaithful to salt. § Native fiddle. || Dancing woman.

¶ Well done!

gone, I have been desired by my master the *Nazir Saheb*, to bring you to the presence, and to report faithfully how I saw you engaged. *Inshallah* ;* I shall make such a report as will be remembered by you." The *Suzawul*, although pretty well steeped in inebriety, was sobered at once by my salutation. He got up, begged of me to be seated next to himself, a *chillum* was handed to me, a kid was sent for, for a *pulao* for me. I reflected that I should act like a fool if I did not enter into the spirit of the moment : so I ungirdled my *kummerbund*, took off my *pugree*, puffed at the *chillum*, and ogled the dancing wench. I will draw a veil over the rest of the evening. Suffice it to say that I was convinced *Suzawulship* was an office of no small importance in the revenue departments of the State.

Next morning the *Qanoongo* and myself proceeded to the *Kacherree*, and I duly reported to the *Nazir* that the *Suzawul* was busy all day in collecting the rents for the *Sircar*, and that he could not possibly have come away sooner than he did.

But the great man, "who plays fantastic tricks before high heaven," is the *Kommishnur Koorkee* ; and I have watched his doings with much edification. He has his *Sudder Kacherree*, and writes his *roobakarees* like a *Hakim*. As far as I could learn from the *Mooktyars* and *Mohurrirs* of the Collector's office, the duties of this officer are simply those of an Ameen of distraint and sale, for which he is entitled to a commission of ten per cent. on the proceeds of sale. And in the event of a compromise, or non-completion of sale, from any cause whatsoever, he is entitled to five per cent. on the valuation of the property distrained ; the resources from this commission only would amount to about 35 or 40 rupees per mensem. The *Kommishnur Saheb* has to pay the rent of a suitable *kacherree*. He has a *Mohurrir* on seven rupees a month, and six *Chupprasees*, at least, to whom he must give three rupees each. Thus, little enough, it would appear, is left for the provision of the great man, himself. He has, generally, a wife and several children at home. He sports a horse or palkee, keeps one or two servants, and a comely woman-servant, who acts as his *khidmutgar*. Money must be found for these expenses, and, by the blessing of the *Deotas*, who watch over the prosperity of the mysteries of chicanery, it is never wanting. Without tiring my readers with all the minutiae of trickery, I shall just give a few examples of extortion.

A. sues B. for one hundred rupees, due to him as *malgoozaree*. He attaches property worth 50, but appraised at 25 rupees. The usual processes are gone through, and the property sold for 25 rupees. Out of this sum, the *Kommishnur* coolly deducts ten per cent. on the *zur-dawee* (amount of claim), which, in this case, is ten rupees, and the party who levied the distress receives but 15 rupees ; whereas the *Kommishnur* was legally entitled to a tenth of 25 rupees, or 2 rupees, 8 annas only, instead of ten rupees. This iniquitous practice of misappropriation has been so far checked,

* Please God !

that is is not openly exhibited in the accounts, as it used to be in the "good old days."

Again, A. distrains the property of B. for an alleged claim of 100 rupees, but the property is appraised at only *ten rupees*. But a sale is not effected, owing to a compromise. Now, had a sale taken place, the *Kommishnur* would legally have received one-tenth of ten, or one *rupee*. But since no sale took place, he is entitled only to eight annas; however, he takes half the usual commission, or five per cent. *on the amount of claim*, from the unfortunate ryot, whose property had been distrained; *or five rupees!* It will thus be made manifest that he modestly takes only *ten times* the commission for doing nothing, instead of that which he would have received for effecting a sale!!!

An *asamee* has been allowed to cut his *khurreef** crop without his rent being demanded. He is in debt, and has paid away the greater part of his produce to the village *Muhajun*; when he finds *two beegahs* of half-grown *sugar-cane* distrained, and notice of sale advertised. If allowed to come to maturity, and the juice to be worked into *goor*, the *two beegahs* of cane would yield from 150 to 200 rupees; but the *zemindar* is resolved to ruin him. The poor *ryot* runs to the *Collector Saheb*, or the *Saheb Dipty*, and petitions against his grinding oppression. He is told to give *malzaminee*,† and to institute *Bejah Koorkee*.‡ He hypothecates the standing crops to his *Muhajun*, who becomes his surety, and the case is instituted. After the usual forms, the case is heard. The *ryot* does not deny that the claim is just, but pleads that if he had time granted him, he would pay the demand, and still save himself from ruin. The *Saheb* says, "*Wajib haee.*"§ But the *Mooktyars* ask whether the *zemindar* is not entitled to receive the *malgoozaree* from the produce of the soil? They allege that the *khurreef* was cut and sold by the *ryot*, without paying the *zemindar* his dues; and that if the *Saheb Bahadoor* will now interfere, how is the *zemindar* to pay the revenue due to the *Sircar*? The *Moonshee-jee* quietly folds his hands to say his *iltimas* ;|| and he urges that the sale of standing crops is authorised by usage. The case is dismissed and the sale ordered. And the poor *ryot* has the option of either permitting his half-grown crops to be purchased by the *zemindar* (*ism furzee*) in a fictitious name at a twentieth of the value, or of borrowing money from the *Muhajun* on the hypothecation of the crops, *at seventy-five per cent. per annum interest*.

Well, thought I, the *Koompanee ka Raj* is a paternal and fostering *Raj* for the poor *ryots*!

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and *men* decay;
Princes and Lords may flourish, or may fade,
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed can never be supplied."

* Crop sown in the rains, and cut in October.

† Suit for replevin.

§ It is correct.

‡ Money security.

|| Humble representation.

CHAP. XXVII.

LOCAL JUNTEE.—THE COLLECTOR AND CIVIL SURGEON.

There is an anomalous kind of court called the “*local juntee*” or *muhakimah aoukaf*—in English, local agency, which is as mysterious and uncontrollable as the *Supreme Court*, of which people say and hear so much. It is a simple enough court in itself, and *might* be made very useful; for it was established simply to look after the interests of government in *escheats*, from what cause soever, and to guard against the misappropriation of endowments for religious purposes of all creeds. The Collector and Civil Surgeon are the *ex-officio* local agents in every district; but they are at liberty, with the sanction of Government, to associate any other official with them, whose services may be found expedient. What could have induced our legislators to drag in the *Doctor Saheb* into the junta I know not; for there are no emoluments of office; and the work is “vexatious to a degree.” Any blackguard in the city, of what caste or persuasion soever, that wishes to annoy, or to screw money out of a wealthy neighbour, gives in a *sowal*, signed *Khyr-khwah-i-sircar*,* alleging that his houses and lands are the *Nuzool* (property) of the State. If people are wise, they buy off the *Khyr-khwah*, otherwise they involve themselves with a mysterious power, that may, whenever it pleases, claim half the city, and contest the ownership of the property in the civil courts. This court is also notable for the *deliberation* of its decisions. Nobody can find out when the court sits; and the holy prophet only knows how long a case may be pending—it may be for days, or weeks, or months, or years! It bangs the equity side of the Supreme Court, by chalks, in its lentissimo progress. There is a characteristic story current in this city, of the late Mr Augustus Brooke, who was for so many years the Governor’s Agent, and at one time chief judge of the provincial court of appeal. When he found a case so voluminous as to alarm his nerves, or (knowing the parties) he was convinced that the case was vexatious, he sent for the *Vakeels* of the litigants and said, “*Bhulla Babajan! ub myn mokuddumma ko ghourkhana men bhejta hoon*” (Well, my dear sons, I shall now send the case to my office of deliberation). The parties in such cases generally made a slow salam, and returned to their homes, satisfied that the deliberations of the *Huzoor* were postponed *sine die*; in other words, the case was burked. The result was understood, therefore the parties in despair never attended; a year afterwards, the cases were struck off the files in default. The sittings and judgments of the *local agency* are pretty similar.

* Well-wisher of Government.

Sometimes, however, when the local agents do bestir themselves for the public interests, they find their good intentions thwarted by parties who produce decrees of civil courts in their favor, for tenements and property that are undoubtedly public, and therefore inalienable. A wealthy individual builds a fine *suraee** for the accommodation of travellers, and to perpetuate his name, makes the establishment one of benevolence. His grandson after his death, gets in debt; and his creditor, after getting a decree in his favor from the civil court, indicates the *suraee* as the property of the defendant. He surrenders to them his rights and interests, the *suraee* is sold and the purchaser, as *malik*, levies his dues from the "*Bhutearahs*," who keep the stalls—in plain words, he levies a fixed hire from every occupant of the *suraee*; and this goes on for years. An energetic Collector happens to be appointed, who in character is a *ghureeb purwur*;† and knowing his duty, endeavours to recover for the agency the control over the *suraees*, mosques, *dewals*, wells, &c., which have slipped into individual hands, as the property of the public, which of course he maintains is inalienable: he asserts the right of the Government, through their local agents, to interfere and prevent this misappropriation of public property. But the *fact of possession for thirty years* ruins the cause, and the Civil Court decides against the agents.

A wealthy individual dies, leaving large property in houses, lands, villages, and ready money, by will, to be devoted to the performance of the rites of the Hindoo religion. An executor by will is also appointed. Some fifty years elapse, and a *Khyr-khwah* petitions the local agents to take possession of, and manage the property, on the score of misappropriation of funds, alienation of property, etc. Lengthened investigation takes place, law-suits are instituted, and won by the agents of the *Sircar*, and they take possession of the remainder of the property. Heirs of the original testator and the heirs of the legatee repeatedly come forward to take the management into their own hands; but the lion's grip is not more easily relaxed than the possession of the *local juntee*. The parties are referred to the Civil Courts, and the fact of malversation having been once proved against the legatee, the courts always decide for the *Sircar*. "But how are the funds appropriated?" you enquire. You will scarcely believe it, but on the faith of *Islam*, I swear that the money goes to feed the *Pundahs*, *Ghateahs*, *Poojarees*, and the host of the Brahminical tribe. I have witnessed with horror and astonishment, the daily rations of rice, *dall*, *atta*, *ghee*, doled out by order of the local agents, and the produce of several gardens, the flowers of the season, taken to the *dewals*, for offerings to the idols therein enshrined. Here, thought I, are the *Saheban Aleeshan*, who abuse the pure faith of *Islam*, and ridicule the *bootpurustee*‡ of the Hindoos; here are the direct organs and representatives of Government fostering idol-wor-

* Inn.

† Cherisher of the poor.

‡ Idol-worship.

ship! I wished devoutly, that I had the power to appropriate the whole of the funds towards the building and endowment of a *musjid*;* for then I should have constituted myself the *moo-tuwullee*,† and have enjoyed in this life the blessings promised by the prophet to the faithful hereafter. But I consoled myself with the reflection, that idol-worshippers and their aiders and abettors would alike burn in the fires of Jehunnum.

I remarked, as a most singular fact, that in the large and rich city of *Kashee*, it never happened that any person, possessed of large property died without heirs and intestate. *Well-wishers* give in *sowals* purporting that *Baboo Fullanah* died intestate and without heirs; praying that the property should be confiscated to the use of government, and that the well-wisher be duly provided for. But a fellow at once comes forward, with a *Bukhshisnamah* (deed of gift) duly registered and witnessed, to prove himself the legal owner. The witnesses are summoned and examined on oath; and they swear to every particular of the deed of gift. Government is *flummuxed* (as the *Persians* say); and a clever scoundrel, who is no more entitled to the property than I am, enjoys the fruits of his nefarious ingenuity. Thus it happens also, that *Gosaeens* and *Mohunts* never die heirless. A favorite *Chelah*, or a well-favoured youth retained for the "*Dhundah*"‡ of the *Muhunt* or *Gosaeen*, generally manages to come in as heir.

But to cheat the government is a common practice of every day, and is considered a glorious achievement. It is when two, or three, or more heirs contest a property, and every claimant produces a deed in his favour duly authenticated and registered, that the skill of the parties is to be admired. Greek meets Greek. The party or parties in possession let the other claimants "do their worst." They sue in *forma pauperis* (emphatically known as "*papuree*") and are put to no expence in stamps and *Vakeel's* fees. But the unfortunate wight in possession has to pay every authorised and every possible kind of fee; and after spending some thousands, gets a decree in his favour, with costs chargeable to plaintiffs. They make their *salams* and leave the court, while the decree-holder finds it impossible to recover a *dumree*.§ As for the costs of stamped paper due by the pauper to Government, it is hopeless in most cases to expect to recover. The fact is, our legislators, from a too tender regard to justice, have encouraged the institution of suits in *forma pauperis*, to the great detriment of their own stamp revenue; and to the infinite annoyance of the legislators. Thus a beggar composedly claims *ten lakhs of rupees* as his inheritance, and gets a hearing without paying a cowree, while the defendant has to defend the case wantonly brought against him at an expence of several thousands.

* Mahomedan mosque.

† Officiating priest.

‡ Personal Attendance.

§ A fractional part of a pice.

CHAP. XXVIII.

THE SURVEY AND OTHER OPERATIONS IN THE N. W. PROVINCES.

Most of my readers have heard of *Jan Burd Saheb Bahadoor's* famous *bundobust* of the North Western Provinces. But few know the details of that settlement, and of the causes which rendered it a failure. My readers, therefore, will pardon a dry chapter, when it is written not so much for their amusement as for their instruction.

The whole of the ceded and conquered provinces laboured under the disadvantage of short leases for the revenue for a term of five or ten years. This unsettled people's minds; and there was a perpetual struggle between Government and the *zemindars*—on the part of the first to augment the revenue to its full proportion, which it was firmly believed stood clipt and reduced by low official jugglery, and on the other, to reduce the jumma by every mode of lying, fraud and bribery. The periodical revision of settlements, naturally forced upon the Government the retention of a large establishment for the express purpose of making the required settlements, and burdened it besides with the expense of highly-paid Revenue Boards, as well as their deputations over various parts of the country. The great desiderata were the precise limits of each estate, and, therefore, the exact area. This led to the appointment of young gentlemen of the Civil Service, as *Settlement Officers*, under Regulation VII. of 1822, and the employment of *Revenue Surveyors* to carry out the revenue measurements in the most efficient manner. The object was to settle at once, and for ever, the endless disputes of contested boundaries; to fix an equitable assessment on the lands with reference to the existing means and future capabilities of the villages from the Surveyor's returns and the Settlement Officer's personal observations; and to make long leases of twenty or thirty years with the *zemindars*, and thus induce them to lay out their capital in the improvement of the soil. In short to save, by one grand effort, the expense perpetuated by keeping up large establishments as had hitherto been the practice.

But the root of the evil was the ignorance of the officers to whom the work was intrusted, as to the exact nature of what they were required to perform. The young Settlement Officers had to learn the rudiments of the revenue system, and the Surveyors were not instructed to prepare their papers, so as to tally in all points with the *records of the Collector's Office*. In the essential point of lists of estates in each *purgunnah* the returns of the survey and settlement officers differed materially. A confusion was made between *muhals* and *mouzahs*.* In many

* A *muhāl* is any portion of land which has a distinct entry in the revenue rent-roll. A *mouzah* means the lands of a village. Thus, a village may contain many *muhals*; and a *muhāl* may be composed of several portions of separate and distinct *mouzahs*.

instances, the Collector, the Settlement Officer and Surveyor, were at open feud, or were privately bent on playing at cross-purposes, and thwarting each other. The Surveyors conceived that their duty was confined to measuring the lands in each *hulka*, *chukker*, or separate estate, as defined by the Settlement Officer. The Settlement Officer had a very difficult duty to perform. He had to show a great increase in the aggregate jumma of each *purgunnah*, and yet was to satisfy the people. At first these paper settlements and the undigested reports that accompanied them appeared to satisfy the superior authorities ; but the *working* of the system proved bad. *Zemindars* could not afford to pay yearly losses. They tried a desperate game, and neglected the cultivation to induce a remission of revenue. Their estates were sold to recover the balances due to the *Sircar*. The new purchasers rack-rented the tenants, who fled, and affairs became worse than ever. Then came the Revenue Surveys, and a desperate struggle arose of bribery on the one hand, on a large scale, to prevent the real areas and resources of villages from being brought to light ; and on the other hand, a vigorous endeavour to arrive at the actual truth by searching investigations. My readers will decide for themselves which party was likely to get the upper hand in the strife. It is notorious that every Native official, of whatever grade, not only was promoted by gigantic strides, but they all contrived to improve the opportunity for their own benefit—" *ba doulut Sircar !*"

The *principle* of the Revenue Settlements was excellent, and evinced the wisdom and practical skill of the legislature, and of the many able men who composed the Boards of Revenue. But the great mistake was to saddle the important undertaking with an order to go through a fixed quantity of work within a definite time, and to make the assessments as high as the country could possibly bear with reference to its means. It is true that several orders were issued to the Settlement Officers to make the *bundobusts* light, in order that the people might not be overburdened, at the same time keeping in view that government should receive its just dues. But to this order there could be but one construction, and it was like telling a cook to slaughter a calf, and then out of superfluous humanity to shed tears over the untimely fate of the unfortunate animal. Wherever remission was suggested, or an increase recommended, disproportionate to the *apparently* existing means, so many explanations were called for that officials grew wary and wise, and tried to square the statements so as to *appear* faultless. And yet it is hard to blame the higher officials for their suspicions. While some Settlement Officers, like the late lamented "*James Muir*," zealously and honestly pursued their arduous course amidst the blessings of thousands ; others again contented themselves with hunting and shooting through the length and breadth of the district entrusted to them, and formed their opinion of the nature and value of the soil they had ridden over, intent only

on their "*shikar*." But I have gone far enough with my *prolegomena*, and shall return to the beginning of my subject, and show how the work proceeded.

A set of hungry *Ameens* were let loose upon the district, whose duty it was to set up earthen *termini* at every angle of the boundary of each estate. Of course they were paid by the job, but they were open to persuasion, when offered in the shape of coin; and when offers were not voluntary and satisfactory, they, by fair means or by foul, extorted large sums from the zemindars. On the least attempt at backing out, they were reported as men inclined to palm frauds to the *Peshkar*, who in turn sent up the reports to the Settlement Officers, and the Zemindars were roundly fined. Suppose the demarcation of a *purgunnah* completed, then the survey operations commenced.

First and foremost, a fat *Tindal* went to every large village, and gathering the notables together, he announced to them that the "*Paemash-ka-luskur*" would encamp therein; and, mind friends he would say, "get ready ten thousand *maiks* (tent pins), large supplies of straw, and *chuppurs* for the stables and cook-rooms of the *Sahebs* of the establishment. This hint was always sufficient to induce the Zemindars to shell out handsomely, and to beg of the *Tindal* to represent to the "*Saheb-i-Mussah*"* that the village was not adapted for an encampment. The *Tindal* knew very well that the village was too much out of the way to be chosen by the Surveyor, so he pocketed the rupees, went on his way to the next large village, and repeated his experiment of selecting an encampment with similar success. Well, the encampment has been at length selected, and parties of *khulasees* sent out to prepare the villages for survey.

This process consisted in fixing the theodolite stations, and removing any obstructions in a direct line between every two stations, so as to admit of as correct chain-measurements as possible. But the line-cutters had a fine harvest. A rich crop of sugar-cane, or a fine old mango tree, or a peepul, held in veneration by the villagers, *would* come into the direct line. If the zemindars paid freely, the station was removed to one side to avoid the trees or the crops. If they asserted independence, a report of opposition to the survey was made, and in most cases the villagers were heavily mulcted by the Settlement Officer.

* Surveyor.

CHAP. XXIX.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SURVEYORS.

The lines being prepared for survey, parties of Surveyors were sent out to measure the boundaries. This used to be carefully and satisfactorily done at first by European Assistants; but it was discovered in the course of time that it was *cheaper* to use Native Agency and to pay 25 rupees a month to a boundary Surveyor, instead of 150 or 200 to an Assistant. This notable discovery, however, did not answer its end. The Governor-General of the day, Lord William Bentinck, convened a meeting of *Revenue Surveyors* (officers in the military service) at Allahabad; and then and there resolved to carry through the great work *at once* by the employment of Native Agency under European supervision. It took some time, of course, to train Natives to their work; but it *was* at length accomplished; and the work then got on as rapidly as the projectors had anticipated. But the new *material* had odd notions of honesty, and, of course, adopted it, as it seemed to be most beneficial to individual interests. The Tindals nearly lost their monopoly, and the gathering of the harvest devolved on more influential hands. The *Lalla Saheb*, or, as he used sometimes to be styled, the *Kumpass-wala*, claimed and took the lion's share of the perquisites. But you ask, "How were the perquisites obtained?" Why, a common trick was for the *Kumpass-wala* to adjust his theodolite, and to pretend surprise that the magnetic needle would not play. The Tindal would anxiously inquire what was wrong. The *khulasees* would do the same. The zemindars present would thus have their curiosity excited, and would crowd round the theodolite with gaping mouths. At last the Tindal would venture to ask the *Lalla Saheb* whether the usual morning *pooja* to the instrument had been performed? This acted as a flapper to the *Lalla*; and he asked his next neighbour, a zemindar, to put a rupee on the glass of the needle. It was done; but deuce a bit would it move. The attraction is not sufficiently strong, he would say; try another. This was done until the patience of the villagers was exhausted, and they had put down as many as ten rupees. The *Lalla* gingerly touched the catch, and the needle swung round to the astonishment and edification of the villagers. The rupees were pocketed, and divided afterwards among the whole of the party. But the ordinary mode was to induce the zemindars to believe that the *Kumpass-wala* had it in his power to increase or decrease the area of the village by a single squint at the *Kumpass*.

Many an amusing story did I hear of this wonderful *Kumpass*. It possessed the power of reversing everything observed. Hence, if you looked through the *doorbeen** at a fort, everything *inside* was revealed! Thus the *Feeringhees* so readily took forts: not by skill or by valour, but by means of the wonderful power of the *doorbeen*. A young *Rajpoot*, who was a gay deceiver among the

* Telescope.

softer sex, asked whether the *doorbeen* would shew a woman with her head downwards. "To be sure it would," was the reply. "But what is your object?" "Why," said he, "if the feet be uppermost, the clothes must fall down over the head, and what fun that would be!" The story got wind; and if ever a village woman approached a *Kumpass-wala's* party, she squatted down, and covered herself well; so that no exposé should take place, if the *doorbeen* were directed at her.

The boundary survey over, a party of detail measurers went out to measure the cultivation. If the zemindar feed highly, a good portion of cultivated land was put in as fallow or waste; and specifications of soil noted so favourably as to induce a belief that the cultivation was not highly productive. The item of irrigation was exaggerated in the same manner. There were *no wells, no ponds, no streamlets* to furnish an adequate supply of water. If the zemindar did not pay, then a picture diametrically opposite was drawn and submitted. The cultivation was increased; every deserted field on which the furrow of a plough was faintly visible, was included under the head of cultivation. The barren waste was entered as "arable," and even tracts of pure sand were represented as fertile. Every field was highly irrigated; and the sources of irrigation multiplied.

It was soon found that a detail-survey, such as I have attempted to describe, was of little service to the Settlement Officer. There was, in the first place, no data for an *asameewar* settlement; and, secondly, the extent of cultivation was more than doubtful. Then was introduced the admirable mode of *khusrah surveys*; a most excellent mode of procedure if you can look sufficiently sharp after the *Ameen*, to force him to be honest and correct. The mode of procedure was as follows. Well-trained *Ameens* were sent to sketch and measure *each separate field* with an iron chain, which was occasionally tested at head-quarters. This map, when completed, was called a "*shujrah*;" and exhibited every detail on a large scale. A register-book, called a "*khusrah*," shewed the number of every field, the name of the cultivator, the length and breadth, the area in local *beegahs*, the denomination of soil, and whether the field was irrigated or otherwise, and from what source. But the evil was, that the Surveyor was bound to perform a certain quantity of work within a fixed time; and it was physically impossible for him to look after a hundred or more *Ameens*, spread over a wide tract of country. A natural jealousy between the establishments of the Surveyor and Settlement Officer induced the latter to scrutinize too carefully the work of the Surveyor's *Ameens*, and at last a compromise was effected. The Settlement Officer placed at the Surveyor's disposal an establishment of examiners and testers, who reported to the Surveyor; and this officer *re-tested* the work of the Settlement Officer's men. This was done by drawing, at random, red lines over the surface of the field map; on which lines the examiners proceeded, and so did the Surveyor himself. But it

will be palpable to the understanding of everybody, that only a small portion of the *khusrah* work *could* be thus tested. This arrangement, however, was a grand thing for the Surveyor; for the papers having once been filed in the Surveyor's office, with the verification of the Settlement Officer's testing *Ameens*, the responsibility was removed from the former department, and saddled upon the latter. But I shall proceed to give the reader some notion of the "*modus operandi*" of the *khusrah Ameens*.

At the commencement of the *khusrah* surveys the simple and unsophisticated mode of measurement with *ropes* of Indian hemp, or thongs of leather, was adopted. But let any one that chooses try the experiment; and he will be astonished at the difference of measurement with the same rope, when in a dry, and when in a wet state. Testing was out of the question; for the most startling discrepancies were put down to the score of contraction and expansion of the ropes! To prevent such excuses, iron chains, formed of a stated number of links, and of the size of half a square of a local *beegah* were introduced. I may as well say that every *beegah*, whatever may be its size, is a square of twenty "*lutthas*" or poles. Each chain was therefore divided into *ten lutthas*; and each *luttha* into ten links. If a zemindar paid handsomely, each *luttha* was lengthened by the addition of one link; and if he would not pay, it was shortened in the same proportion. Thus the area of every field, and consequently of the entire cultivation, was increased or decreased to a considerable degree. Where bribery took root to any extent, it went throughout the establishment of the *testers* and the *Mohurrirs* and *Moonshees* of the Survey and Settlement office; and every return was *fudged*, as school-boys term it.

It once so occurred, that in a whole *purgunnah* of a certain district, the survey papers shewed *no irrigation* throughout its entire length and breadth. The Surveyor and Settlement Officers resolved to see with their own eyes, and sent their tents into the *purgunnah*. Next morning they proceeded to inspect several villages. It was in the month of November, when, if the rains closed early, irrigation is resorted to for producing the young *rubbee* crops. Marks of old water-courses were to be seen in abundance, but not a well was visible. Very odd! they thought; "Let us follow these water-courses from the fields, and see where they will lead to." It was done; but it ended in a large stack of bajra-stalks (*kurbee*). They tried another, and a third, but the result was similar. At last, grown desperate, they commenced removing a stack, when several of the villagers begged of them to desist, lest some accident should occur. They *did persist*, however, and discovered that a well was hidden by the stack of *kurbee*!!! They tried several more experiments, with the same satisfactory result. The *Ameens* were fined heavily, and the *testers* turned off! and so disgusted was the Settlement Officer at the trick played upon him, that he taxed every field at the highest rate of a field properly irrigated, whether it had such advantage or not.

CHAP. XXX.

THE SETTLEMENT OFFICERS' DUTIES.

In the matter of irrigation, soil, average of produce, name of the holder of the field, and even his *caste*, the *Ameens* reaped a rich harvest. I have already shewn how statements regarding the first were falsified. As the criterion of the produce of the soil generally is formed from its quality, the returns were ordinarily made to suit the ultimate views and ends of the *Ameens*. The name of the holder was a most important point, and which the Surveyors themselves did not understand rightly; and the changes under this head occasioned serious mischief. The distinction of *Seer lands** and *Sikhmee Asamees*† and hereditary cultivators was not understood, or not regarded. When an opulent *Asamee* of the Rajpoot or Brahmin castes asserted independence, and would not pay, he was recorded as a "*Chumar*!" When the register of holdings was publicly tested, and *fullanah Chumar* called, no answer was returned from sheer pride of caste; and the unfortunate wight was obliged to petition the Settlement Officer, and to fee the *Qanoongo* and *Mohurrirs* handsomely to get his name correctly entered. But what I have said was merely the light skirmishing of irregular troops—the real seat of war was the *Kacherree-i-paemash*; and the chief plunderers were the *Moonshees* and their satellites in that department.

When a *Khusrah* was tested and signed by the Surveyor, it was sent into the *Moonsheekhanah*. Now, the signature was confined to the leaf shewing the *total area*. Nightly durbars were held by the *Moonshee-jee*, and large sums were paid him to *falsify the papers entirely*. The page shewing the total area, and bearing the Surveyor's signature, was the same, but the details were entirely changed. This was proved to have occurred in the *district of Puttehpoor*; and what guarantee is there that similar tricks and deception were not, more or less, universal?

The survey-papers are at length prepared, and such as they are, sent to the Settlement Office. What did the *mohtimim bundobust* do to correct them? He could not cry down the *khusrahs*, because his own establishment had pronounced them to be correct. The most that was attempted was a revision of the names of the cultivators, *ferisht ba dulmewesee*; but the same causes that disfigured the accuracy of the survey papers, were here also in full operation, and the result was "confusion worse confounded."

* Lands entered in the names of proprietors, and cultivated either by themselves or their under-tenants.

† Under-tenants, whose names are not registered.

Now came the actual responsibilities of the Settlement Officers' duties. He had to fix a rental upon each *muhāl*. He had to apportion the *malgoozaree* of each *ryot* to the extent of his holding. He had to adduce reasons for the reduction or increase of the revenue. The proper mode would have been for the *Saheb mohtimim* to proceed into every village and judge for himself, and then to decide this important point. But, alas! few had the inclination to take so much trouble; and even if they had, they were hampered by the orders of the superior authorities. They were expected to go through a certain quantity of work; and to save their credit they did so, but to the frustration of the object for which government had appointed them. A common mode was to divide each *purgunnah* into a number of imaginary portions—assuming that each portion consisted of similar soil and facilities for irrigation. Suppose, in passing his order, the *Mohtimim bundobust* were to declare that such a *purgunnah* had the finest soil and was extremely well watered: a Zemindar present insinuated, with folded hands, “*Gureeb purwar mera sub dhurtee bullooa hae! panee nahee!*”* The *Saheb* would say, “Did I not ride through the *purgunnah* on my way to shoot tigers?” “But, sir, my village is five coss off the road!” “What of that, fellow! am I blind, or shall I see through your eyes?” The *Saheb* chuckled at his own wit, and the *Sherishtadar* and *Peshcars*, as in duty bound, laughed sardonically, and exclaimed—“*Ayee! kumbukht! Huzoor undha hae!!!*”†

Thus it will be seen, that, by assuming an arbitrary standard, a false valuation of the estates was, as a consequence, made. Scores of really profitable *muhals*, that were assessed on the average, were very greatly under-rated; while other estates that were poor, and whose productiveness fell under the average by being lumped with their more profitable neighbours, were irretrievably ruined. The reports of settlement were plausible enough and read well; but the results of experience prove the falsity of the data upon which the settlement operations were based. In calculating the means of a village, the ordinary mode was to take the average of the rates of *malgoozaree*, and thereby multiply the number of *beegahs* under cultivation, to deduct therefrom the ordinary village expenses, and ten per cent. for the Zemindar's *malikana* (or dues for right of management), and the balance was the government *jumma*. Suppose an estate with 1,000 *beegahs* of cultivation, and the average *malgoozaree* rate to be three rupees a *beegah*, the gross assets would be assumed at 3,000 rupees. There are two *chowkedars* and one *Goraiat* at two rupees a month each, and a *Putwaree* at four rupees. The annual expense would be 120 rupees. The *mali-*

* Cherisher of the poor! the whole of my lands are sand—there is no water!

† Oh! evil fortune! is “the presence” blind?

kana at ten per cent. would be 300 rupees. The accounts would stand thus:—

<i>Hal hasil</i> (present assets).....	Rs.	3,000
Deduct <i>malikana</i> at 10 per cent....		300
Rupees... ..		2,700
Deduct wages of village servants,... ..		120
Balance, or Government revenue		2,580

By the above calculation it will be seen that the Government revenue bore the extraordinary proportion of 86 per cent on the gross returns.

But the duties of a Zemindar do not consist only in receiving the rents from the *ryots*. He is obliged, or he *should* be obliged, to make advances to the needy villagers for seed, for the purchase of cattle, and for alleviating calamities of season. He is obliged to renew old wells, to dig new ones, and to incur a pretty considerable figure in *nuzzurs* to the *Qanoongo*, the *Tahseeldar*, and the *Darogah* of police. None of these items are ever taken into account; and however much the notion of allowing or conniving at such fees may be repudiated, yet *they are extorted*; and, therefore, some allowances should be made for this *secret service* expense. Let any one that is doubtful, purchase a pair of oxen and a plough, and cultivate one or five, or ten *beegahs* of land. Let him set down carefully every item of expenditure, including the expense of irrigation. Let him add to all this the ground rent to the Zemindar and the interest on the money expended. Then take the current or average price of grain and bhoosa, and set both calculations of expenditure and profit in juxta-position, he will then have some notion of the large profits of an agriculturist.

But the roguery of the Zemindars themselves was amusing; and the way in which they cheated the Settlement Officers astonished me. One fellow had 150 beegahs of very inferior land on one side of his estate, and during the demarcation he himself cut it off from his village. The neighbouring Zemindar was only too glad to get 150 beegahs for nothing that did not belong to him; so he held his tongue. On the opposite side of the village there were some exceedingly rich fields, which the Zemindar claimed as a portion of his estate that he had been fraudulently deprived of. About two years after, when the *bundobust* was being made, he petitioned that his estate was estimated at 1,000 beegahs, whereas the survey made the area 750 beegahs. He alleged that a neighbouring village had a larger area than he was assessed for, and prayed that the papers of the last *bundobust* should be examined. He gained his point, and at a trifling expense gained 150 beegahs of the richest land for the same quantity of the worst description abandoned in another direction.

In the *Turaee*, vegetation is so rank, that lands, deserted for a couple of years, are so thickly covered with long grass jungle as to induce a belief that the plough had never furrowed it. The unconscious Surveyor and Settlement Officer shot *floriken* and *black partridges* in these plots of land; and, of course, readily believed that they were part of the uncultivated jungle. The *bundobust* over a hundred ploughs rooted up the grass, and smiling fields of plenty rewarded the Zemindar and cultivator for their ingenuity in deception.

CHAP. XXXI.

THE DEPUTIES' DUTIES.

I have hitherto spoken of the Settlement Officers only, and shall now notice the *Deputies* who played a very important part in the settlement operations. In most instances, they adjudicated all disputes connected with the revenue; and an appeal lay from their decisions to the Settlement Officer, in the same way as appeals lay from the orders of the latter, to the Commissioner of Revenue. In most instances the Deputies employed on settlement were Natives of the country, Hindoos of the *Kayesth* tribe and *Moosulmans*. There were queer stories told of some of these worthies; and complaints of a serious nature were, on more than one occasion, made to the highest authorities against them; but the petitions were disregarded. "We cannot afford to listen to complaints against men who get through their work so well" — or, "Whenever a public officer does his duty the people are sure to abuse him, and to charge him falsely," &c., was the usual way of disposing of these matters. Of course, this leaning in their favor inspired them with fresh confidence, and they went to work under the hope of impunity. If these gents would not work well, it was not imputed to their inefficiency or unwillingness; but their salaries were increased to induce them to exert themselves! Thus conduct which would have sufficed to damage the reputation and prospects of an European officer, most extraordinarily went to elevate the character and fortunes of the Natives, an anomaly that at this distant time we are surprised to find was gravely sanctioned.

I was much amused at the way in which zemindars were hunted out and discovered, and rights forced upon people who had ceased to *hope* for them. But, it may be said, that it is never too late to do justice. True, I reply; if the justice (so called) to one does not involve a greater injustice to another. In the North-Western Provinces entire *purgunnahs* were held by single individuals, who called themselves Rajahs—for instance, *purgunnahs Koothar* and *Powaeen*, in zillah *Shajehanpore*—who had usurped property by the sharp argument of the sword, previous to the acquisition of the province by the British

Government, and were afterwards, for years, recognised as proprietors without question. These large proprietors mismanaged their property, and rack-rented the *ryots*, and the local government ordered *Mofussil* settlements to be made with the *Purdhans* and *Moquddums*. The entire management was taken out of the hands of the *Talooqdars*, and they were allowed a per centage, or *malikana*, on the Government assessment. But there was a peculiarity in the tenures of the province of *Benares*; and it is to this province that my allusion applies as to the hunt for zemindars.

The peculiarity in the tenure was this. When *Junab Jonatheen Dunkeen Bahadoor* made his famous ten years' settlement of *Sircar Benares*, previous to completing an *istimraree*, or perpetual *bundobust* for the Government revenue, engagements were entered into with the zemindar, or with any parties that would accept of the offered conditions. In A. D. 1795, when the perpetual settlement was completed, *farming arrangements* were made in all those *muhals*, the zemindars of which would not engage with Government, or where the zemindars' rights were not clearly proven. The revenue was fixed in perpetuity; but it was ruled by *Dunkeen Bahadoor* that on proof of the rights of zemindars before the Civil Courts, they were to be put in possession of the zemindaree in dispute. Some parties *did* prove their rights, and *did* get possession through the Civil Courts. But in a great number of instances, the farmers, or their heirs, had kept undisputed possession since 1795, up to 1840-41, when the revision of settlement took place. The common feeling and the public opinion were in favour of the old farmers. They had held possession for *forty-five years*, during which time no person claimed the zemindaree. They had fulfilled every condition of their agreement, and naturally looked upon themselves as the *de facto* zemindars. But it was ruled that farmers had no rights; and to pretend to regard them as zemindars was absurd. The settlement Officers were directed to find out the heirs, lineal or collateral, of the old zemindars, and to make zemindaree settlements with them.

A period of nearly half a century had elapsed and the generation contemporary with *Dunkeen Bahadoor's bundobust* had passed away. But to hunt out their heirs was the object to be effected, and the Settlement Deputy Collectors were ordered on this duty. No sooner was it known to the people at large that such was the desire of the *Sircar*, than scores of claimants for dormant zemindarees started into existence. One proved that he was in possession of a mangoe tree which had once formed part of a grove that had been planted by his ancestor, who was zemindar. Another alleged that the mounds of an old *gurhee*, or fort, in the village, had been in possession of his grandfather. A third asserted that a *pukka* well, in ruins, on the roadside, had been built by his progenitor (*ajah* or *mooris alah*—means like the Scotch expression *forbears*, indiscriminately applied to any

progenitor beyond a grandfather.) Some of the grey-beards of the village deponed accordingly as their memories were prompted by the influence of *silver*. The Qanoongo managed to get hold of a dirty bit of paper called a "*polindah*," in which it was mentioned that a certain individual was zemindar prior to the British Government, and the Qanoongo *had heard* that the said person was an ancestor of one of the claimants. Well, to cut short the story, a settlement was made with one of these parties to the entire exclusion of the farmer resident for nearly half a century.

People were amazed at such proceedings. They shrugged their shoulders and said "*Kea kurreh; hookoom Hakim ka haee!*"* It would surely have been an act of grace becoming our rulers to have boldly asserted that as no parties had proved their rights to the zemindaree when formerly invited to do so, the rights had escheated to Government; and that in consideration of the long possession of the *Moostajirs*,† Government had made over those rights of zemindaree to them. But this was not done, and there appeared to be a confusion of ideas on the subject; for it not unfrequently occurred that a Deputy's order was reversed by the Settlement Officers, and the Settlement Officer's order reversed by the Commissioner, whose order was again upset by the Board, in one continual round of cross-purposes.

A common occurrence was to lengthen out the proceedings of the Deputies as unmercifully as it was possible; so that no *European* patience could stand the verbiage and the round-about allusions of the *roobukarees*. Every one knows how easy it is for a Native writer to spin out to endless length what could have been expressed in a few lines; and my readers will not be greatly surprised to learn that when the appeals from the Deputies' proceedings were numerous, the patience of the appellate authority was exhausted, and was glad to leave matters alone, except in cases of glaring partiality.

The preparation of the *putteedaree* papers, and the declaring the shares of the several proprietors, was a source of great gain; and as this part of the work was also hurried, it was badly done, and gave dissatisfaction to the people. Some parties that had no right whatever to any portion of an estate, managed to get themselves re-recorded proprietors, and one clever rogue, *Pudarut Singh*, contrived to acquire large possessions. *Pudarut* first of all used A. in the Civil Court for a twelve anna share, or three-fourths of the village of *Danealpoor*. A notice was duly served on A., and he replied, that he was not in possession, and knew nothing of *Pudarut's* claim, but still he had to defend a vexatious suit. Upon this, *Pudarut sumjhaoed* him and offered to pay costs of suit, and to give him a hundred rupees into the bargain if he would file an *ekbal dawee*. "You can lose nothing my friend, for I wish to fight it out with

* What can be done? It is the order of the rulers.

† Farmers.

Ameer Alee ; and if I get *Danealpoor*, you will obtain possession of a quarter as my *Putteedar* for nothing." The bait was swallowed, and an *ekbal dawee* filed. *Pudarut Singh* bided his time with consummate patience ; he was not fool enough to contest the ownership of *Danealpoor* with *Ameer Alee*, for he was aware he would not succeed. But after the conclusion of the revision of settlement, *Pudarut Singh* very coolly put his claim for three-fourths, or 12 annas in every estate that had been settled with A. The *ekbal dawee* filed in the Civil Court, in the case of *Danealpoor*, was adduced by *Pudarut* as a proof of his right, his claim was acknowledged, and he was put in possession.

CHAP. XXXII.

THE DUTY OF THE REVENUE AUTHORITIES.

The settlements over, and the *putteedaree* papers prepared, there still remained the very important matter of preparing the *jummabundees* (registers of holdings). If that which concerns the greatest number be of the greatest importance, then the *jummabundees* were the most important part of the settlement work. It was "the book" of the poor cultivator, and by it, mainly, would be decided every case of dispute for rent or replevin between landlord and tenant. The enlightened, humane and distinguished gentleman who governs at this moment the destinies of the N. W. Provinces, was fully aware of the importance to be attached to these papers. *Junab Jan Burd Saheb* reiterated his injunctions on this head ; but they made a grand mistake, in taking for granted that their orders would be carried out. And hither again the *incubus* that weighed painfully on the settlement operations transferred its morbid weight. *The work was to be done within a given time.* The Deputies issued *dustucks* upon the zemindars, and forced them to pay *tullubana* until the *jummabundees* were filed. The *Putwarees* were seized, brought into camp, and coerced to prepare the papers on a model they did not understand, and which could only have been properly prepared in the villages themselves, the *ryots* had few opportunities to object to the entries respecting themselves, and the register of holdings was an imaginary register, prepared by the *Putwaree* at random, to escape duress, or instigated by parties who had a design to effect. The superior authorities directed that a copy of the *Jummabundee* of every village should be proclaimed by beat of drum in the village ; and then be kept in the most public place for fifteen days, to enable people to satisfy themselves of its correctness. But few of the cultivators, comparatively, can read ; and those that could, and were curious, tried the experiment ; but found that the pages "were a sealed book to their understanding." A villager found

that numbers were fixed on his fields. Nobody could tell him how they were to be recognised in the field. He was dissatisfied and gave a petition on stamp paper to the Deputy, objecting to the *Jummabundee*. The *Putwaree* was asked to explain what was equally unintelligible to himself. He asked the villager—“*Tor Jote men lumber dus bah?*”* “*Gosyneah janeh!*”† was the reply. “*Urreh! lumber dus pokhur oopur bah yanuhée?*”‡ “*How?*” granted the *ryot*. “Again, is not No. 5 in your *jote*?” “The Lord knows!” “What, is not the field to the west of No. 100 in your *jote*?” “No.” The *Putwaree*, however, swore it was; and the entry remained as it stood at first.

I cannot call the attention of the revenue authorities too strongly to this important point—the correction of the *jummabundees*. It should have been a work of time and of patient, laborious, and *honest* investigation. The Deputies should have been forced to pitch such a number of camps in every *purgunah*, as would have enabled them to redress the real or imaginary wrongs of every *asamee* by personal and pains-taking local inquiry. What is palpable to the understanding at a glance, can never, except by some lucky chance, be elucidated by the examination of witnesses. I have shewn that the *jummabundee* papers were filed according to a form that was not understood, and which, by a ridiculous misinterpretation, was known as the “*nuksha-i-paragraff*” (Because a Settlement Officer directed the preparation of the papers according to a certain paragraph of the Board’s Circular orders.) In this, all that was attempted was to fix, as they best might, the numbers of every field on the holdings of the several *asamees*, so as to make the *jummabundee* tally, *apparently*, with the Survey and Settlement papers. No thought was given to exhibit the actual state of things, or to correct inaccuracies that crept in during a course of years.

I will relate what actually occurred within the limits of Sircar Benares, not ten years ago, to shew the necessity of personal inspection. There was a village, in which the zemindar alleged, that the river Ganges had swallowed up *three hundred beegahs* of the best land, subsequent to the survey of the district; and he therefore prayed that a corresponding reduction in the *jumma* should be made. Inquiries were made through the *Qanoongo* and *Putwaree*, who deponed on oath to the fact of the alleged encroachment of the river. The *Huzoor* allowed the remission, “*Ta hookoom sanee.*”§ In another case, the same officer received a petition from certain zemindars and *ryots*, praying that the revenue on *one hundred and fifty beegahs* of land be remitted, on the score of “*Bullooa-boord.*”|| This was also allowed, “*Ta molahaza Huzoor.*”¶ As most of my readers will be puzzled to know what “*Bullooa boord*” means, I will explain by telling

* Is No. 10 in your Jote (holding)?

† What? Is not No. 10 on the tank?

|| Smothered in sand.

† God knows.

§ Until further orders.

¶ Until inspection.

them that the literal translation is, *buried under sand*. The claim in this instance was founded on the allegation, that one hundred and fifty *beegahs* of rich land had been so covered over by the sand of the Ganges river, as to be no longer culturable. It so happened for the punishment of the iniquities of the aforesaid petitioners, that the investigation of these two cases was made over to an officer who could understand the survey papers, and who was not in the habit of trusting implicitly to *kyfeuts*, however well attested; and he mounted his horse and rode to the spot. On comparing the *shujrah* (or field map) with the spot alleged to have been destroyed by the encroachment of the river, he found, to his astonishment, that the entire fields were intact, and that, owing to the high bank of the river and its escarpment, it was physically impossible for the river to be guilty of any usurpation of seignioral rights. And on proceeding to the spot alleged to have been buried under sand, he found, to his surprise, that the fields indicated in the petition for remission were the *richest and best cultivated in the vicinity!!!* The proper orders were passed, and the *Putwarees* punished by dismissal from office. Now, I would ask, how was it possible for any officer to satisfy himself as to the merits of the case before him, such as I have described, without personal inspection?

And since the jumabundees prepared by the Settlement Deputies were not attempted to be vested by personal inspection, another error was allowed to creep in, which shewed the ingenuity of the zemindars, but was no proof of their foresight. In some resumed *maufee** villages, where the settlement officers were ordered to assess the *muhal* at half the calculated assets, the exmaufeedars exhibited a false rental, in which every *asamee* was put down at one-half of his actual rate of *malgoozaree*. The consequence was that the Government jumma was fixed at *one-fourth* of the actual assets, instead of *one-half*. The jumabundee "*paragraff*" being duly filed, a year or two was allowed to elapse, and then the zemindar petitioned the Collector to be permitted to increase the rates, alleging that he had *just found out* that the *Putwaree* had falsified the *mohtimim's paragraff*. But this prayer was denied, on the ground that he had been guilty of deception, and had wilfully caused his *Putwaree* to mis-state facts, and that he must abide by the consequences. In a similar manner several zemindars filed jumabundees, barely equalling the Government revenue in amount, in the hope that a reduction in the revenue would be made. But a settlement in perpetuity is not so easily set aside, and the invariable result of such roguery was to the loss of the zemindar, and the gain of the *ryot*.

Ever since the jumabundee of the Settlement Office, what has ever been attempted to correct it? *Nothing*. The rule seems to be to warp every succeeding year's *paragraffs*, so as to

* Exempt from revenue.

correspond with the papers filed at the Settlement. The names of defunct parties are entered, as the cultivating *asamees*, and, despite the natural fluctuations in village rentals, the papers are made to correspond, year after year, with almost literal exactness. But how is this to be remedied? Let one Deputy be set apart for these jummabundees and summary suits *alone*, in every district; and if there be still complaints of error, why, turn him out. The present strength of the establishment is insufficient for more than the current duties.

CHAP. XXXIII.

MOONSIFFS, SUDDER AMEENS, PRINCIPAL SUDDER AMEENS, ZILLAH JUDGES AND THE SUDDER DEWANEE ADALUT.

I have endeavoured to expose a few of the blemishes in the administration of the Revenue and Criminal departments; and I shall now notice the *Dewanee Adalut*. My readers will not expect much legal knowledge from "*An Orderly*," so I shall confine myself to noticing facts that have occurred, and which do occur every day in these Courts, and the truth of which may be verified by any one that chooses to make inquiry of the *people*. With all the present extra machinery of Government in this department, the several grades of *Moonsiffs*, *Sudder Ameens*, *Principal Sudder Ameens*, and learned Judges, the system does not work to the satisfaction of the people. As in a piece of machinery having a multiplicity of wheels, the stoppage of a minor wheel will prevent the revolution of the larger ones, so in the machinery of the *Dewanee Courts* the wheels are sometimes checked now at the small end, presently at a medium one, and again at the main wheel, which appears to move all the rest; and the whole will not go on smoothly until they are sufficiently greased by the "*oil of palms*" in the minor division. And here I would have it distinctly understood that my remarks will apply not to any individual, or to any *zillah*, but to the whole system, as a machine, in which there are some screws loose.

As in duty bound, let me begin at the lowest end, and show how justice is done by a *Moonsiff*. The son of a *Lalla* earning *ten rupees* a month, who from childhood is, of necessity, conversant with all the petty chicanery and fraud practised around him, becomes a *Mohurrir*, or writer to a *Vakeel*. He is brought up at the feet of *Gamaliel* like *Paul*, to become a persecutor; and as in *Paul's* case, a miracle must be worked for his conversion. After a few years, the lad finds that he can aptly quote the regulation or construction, or precedent which gained such and such a case. He has a tenacious memory, and is naturally sharp-witted, and aspires to become a *Moonsiff*. He fees the *Serishtadar*, who certifies to his respectability to the judge, who allows his name to be entered as a candidate, and he is permitted to stand an exa-

mination. In the statement presented to the judge, the lad styles himself zemindar ; because, forsooth, his father has a *one pie* share in a small village, which may yield him, perhaps, 24 rupees per annum. In the questions put to the candidates, little else is required to answer them than a retentive memory and a knowledge of the usages of the Courts. No questions are put to test their having been well-grounded in jurisprudence ; no attempt to ascertain the nature of their education, and the depth or shallowness of their understanding. The lad passes his examination, receives his diploma, and, when a vacancy occurs and fortune favours him, he is elevated to the rank and office of a Moonsiff.

Behold the *Lalla* is dropped, and changed for the title of a *Rae Bahadoor* by virtue of his office. He dons an *ummama* or turban, and envelopes himself in an ample *kubba*. He seats himself crossed-legged in a chair (to be on a par with his superior, the *Saheb* Judge) and moves about his head like a porcelain "*Chinese Mandarin*," and occasionally shakes his caput like a "*Burleigh*" to show his extraordinary wisdom. For, be it known, that the heavier a *Kayesth's* head is stuffed with the jargon of the law, the more violently must it play at "*See-saw*" during his pretended or real cogitations. A case comes on. *Baboo Dabee Dyal Singh* versus *Mosummat Dilchusp*, claiming 100 rupees, with interest thereon at 12 per cent ; The *Vakeel* of plaintiff produces the bond duly signed and witnessed. The writer of the bond and the witnesses are summoned. They depone upon oath to the fact of having witnessed the defendant come to the house of the plaintiff, and of her having received the coin, and of her having asked them to witness the transaction. The defendant is served with a notice according to established form. She sends for a *Vakeel* and asks advice. It is a cursed lie, she tells him ; the bond is a fabrication, and the plaintiff and witnesses unknown to her. She asks the *Vakeel* whether he believed *she* would condescend to borrow a paltry hundred rupees, when, from the *Baboo* to the *Rajah*, all are the slaves of her youthful charms ? The *Vakeel* shakes his head in incredulity, and assures her of his best services, but hints that it will be necessary for her to *prove* that she did *not* receive the money, and did *not* write the bond. She throws her fingers out in the face of the *Vakeel* with a "*tobah !*" and desires him to get a decree in her favour and to leave her in peace. The *Vakeel* thinks over the matter, but can find no loop-hole for his client to creep through, except the Moonsiff *Saheb* himself favour her, or that fraud and lying on one side be encountered with a similar array on the other side. He wisely adopts the latter course. He suborns witnesses, who prove that *Mosummat Dilchusp* did send by them the sum of one hundred rupees to *Baboo Debee Dyal Singh*, the plaintiff, with ten rupees for interest thereon. A receipt is produced, which the witnesses recognise upon oath as being the receipt of the plaintiff, and the case is dismissed with costs.

Answer me, ye sapient! who is to blame for using such questionable means to escape the fangs of the law? And yet, without opposing fraud by fraud, how is villany to be encountered. Moral obligations must cease to have influence when the law, which is supposed to protect, is not sufficient to check the atrocious practices which subvert its best ends. Hence ignorant men like myself and my brethren, infer that if the law cannot protect us, we must do so ourselves; and since the law cannot penetrate through the mysterious veil of villany and punish it signally, we must adopt cunning to overthrow conspiracy.

A very false argument is commonly made use of to defend the selection of Moonsiffs from the lower orders of the people—viz, that they are intimately acquainted with the prejudices, the feelings, and the customs of the country; and that they will, therefore, more readily afford satisfactory justice to the *people*, than officials who have no common interest with them. But this is the cant of theory. Ask the *people* themselves, and they will tell you what is acknowledged in all parts of the world, that the *people* naturally look up to the well-born and the well-educated as their protectors; and that they commonly distrust those who have risen from their own level to a higher sphere. The ties of private life *must* operate with more or less force, and bias the judgment; and very few have the moral resolution to withstand the importunity of near connections. This is not sufficiently attended to, and Moonsiffs are appointed to districts where they have been born and bred and where natural associations must bias their judgments. Besides, Hindoo society is so constituted, that deference and respect are paid by the inferior castes to the higher. Were a *Brahmin* to threaten to stab himself if a suit went against him, would any *Kayesth Moonsiff* or *Sudder Ameen* take upon himself to decree against him? These considerations have influence every day, and to a greater degree and extent than most readers can imagine.

Between the Moonsiff and the superior grades to which he may rise, the only difference consists in their different salaries and their degrees of power. The nature of the man continues the same, but his appetite is increased; and why should this surprise people? A *nuzzur* varies in proportion to the status of the party to whom it is offered, and an offering to a small deity, which will be held meet for his dignity, will be an insult to a bigger one, who has been used to hecatombs. In all these grades of office, as in most others, a great evil exists: I allude to the mode adopted of judging of an official's ability and efficiency by certain statements which are called for, monthly, by the superior Courts. These forms are dry statistics of work done; they cannot shew *how* that work was done. Some of the most efficient and honest of our judicial officers—those who are most popular with the *people*—are they that are in bad repute with the *Suddur*. Let me mention one name, and to my humble praise the whole city of *Kashee* will respond—Mr. James

Campier; although respected and revered by the people, he is all but ridiculed in the annual reports of the *Suddur*. As his best eulogium, I will simply say, that he is a *poor man*; and with one exception (the late Moluvee Gholam Yahea) I know no other of whom this can be truly said. In such cases, why is not an occasional *toy* given as a reward? A watch, a ring, a standish may be given as a proud distinction; and the favour will not be wanting in effect, if it be properly bestowed.*

CHAP. XXXIV.

OFFICERS OF JUSTICE.

"*In the good old days*," when Judges received the munificent salary of 300 *rupees* per mensem, the practice of the Courts was to extort in fees from the plaintiff and defendant so much as to enable the Judges to live in splendour, and to retire with princely fortunes. The late Mr. Brooke used frequently to relate how he was enabled to live up to ten thousand rupees a month when his Honourable Masters paid him *three hundred*! Never a petition that was presented was filed, until the party had given a fee to the *Huzoor*, in proportion to the amount or value of the property contested. This was done, as a matter of course, until the final proceeding, when the party who gained the cause presented the Judge with a *Shookranah* (or thanksgiving-offering). Since those days a very different system of payment has been adopted, and the fees are pocketed by Government in the shape of proceeds of stamps. The restrictions on every class of public officers has produced a salutary effect; but every order may be evaded. Even the order lately passed, directing every Judge to write the summing-up (*wujoohat*) in his own hand-writing, is practised in letter, but not in spirit. In many instances, the *Serishtadar* writes the *roobukaree* as usual; the English writer translates the summing-up; and the Judge corrects it and re-writes it!!! Others again, who are men of talent, and quite capable of doing their duty, *have not leisure for the purpose*!—they are so busy in playing at billiards, shooting, or horse-racing; so the work, for which they are paid, is left to be done by their Native officials. But, generally speaking, these are solitary exceptions, and not the rule. An official of this stamp, some years ago, was desirous of proceeding at once to Calcutta to attend some races. He sent for his *Serishtadar*, and desired him to make three parcels of all the cases pending. "Mind, my friend," said the learned Judge, "I shall be absent for one month. Meantime, write the usual orders in every case, and write the decrees for plaintiff in the cases contained in this

* What could be more impressive than a public acknowledgment of good service by a governor; and a public presentation of a token of the respect and consideration of Government?

parcel ; non-suit all the second, and dismiss all the third" !!! Here was an equitable distribution of justice ! The same officer was inclined to favour a party in a suit before him, and he desired the *Serishtadar* to decree for plaintiff. While the *roobukaree* was in course of preparation, the party alluded to waited on the Judge, and entreated of him to befriend him. The *Serishtadar* was sent for, and asked whether the "*hookoom monasib*"* had not been passed ? "Yes junab-i-alee !" Upon this, further enquiry was made ; and the Judge found out that he had intended to *dismiss the case* ! The *Serishtadar* was desired to do so accordingly ; but he had pocketed a handsome fee from the plaintiff, and was what is called "in a fix." He was forced to obey the *Huzoor's* order, but inserted a sentence that rendered the dismissal of the suit nugatory : he quoted Regulation X of 1813, which is applicable only to the *abkaree*. The plaintiff appealed ; and as the order was grounded on false premises, it was of course reversed.

There used to be a very common practice in former years of gentlemen that were found unqualified for the important duties of Collector of Revenue, to be promoted to Judgeships. My readers will doubtless call to mind several such. There was one very well known in this neighbourhood, who was notoriously the puppet of his *Serishtadar*. This latter worthy used to wait in person on the *Huzoor* every morning, with a list of the cases that would be called on that day, and the *Saheb Judge* wrote against each case "*decree*" or "*dismiss*," as he was prompted. In full *Kacherree*, after going through the farce of hearing all the pleadings and depositions, he would decide as had been previously concerted. The *Serishtadar*, although very corrupt, was a very able officer, and the *Saheb* not only seldom had his orders reversed, but was accounted a *wise personage* by the *Suddur*. This gentleman could not tolerate the idea of a European being in Court as a party. One day, a respectable English planter, who had a case in Court, and who could not account for the delay, went in person into the Court. The sapient Judge in a blustering voice demanded his business ? He submitted that he had business, and respectfully enquired whether the Court was not an open one ? "No, sir," was the rejoinder ; "it is not. Go out, sir, and send your constituted *Vakeel*" !!!

The same Judge had a case before him, in which the thing contested was a village, the localities of which were unknown to everybody. However, the learned Judge had discovered that the village contained an area of seventy-five *beegahs*. He decreed accordingly, and a precept was issued to the Collector to put the decree-holder in possession. The Collector respectfully intimated to his *worship*, that if he would depute some person to point out the land decreed, he would duly put the decree-holder in possession. The Judge wrote back, "that it was his

* Proper order.

province to *order*, not to point out how his order was to be executed." The result was, as might have been anticipated, that the order is in abeyance at this very moment. Verily, this man was a *Solomon* !

An Indigo Planter in a neighbouring district took some lands for sowing indigo. His name may have been Smith, or Brown, or Thomas ; so we shall call him *Mr. Thomas*, as the name is a good old name, and sounds well. Mr. Thomas was allowed to sow the indigo seed without opposition ; but when the plant had sprung up, one *Ram Deehul Singh* claimed the land as his and demanded the rent. "Very hard," thinks Mr. Thomas, "to be obliged to pay twice ;" and he told the man to go to law. For he had taken the lands on the good faith of *Fureb Singh*, with whom he had interchanged agreements, and to whom he had made an advance of capital. *Ram Deehul Singh* accordingly instituted a suit against Mr. Thomas for possession of the indigo lands. There was no doubt that he was the rightful owner, so he obtained a decree in his favour, and to be put into possession of his lands immediately. Now, Mr. Thomas's head Mohurrir, or *Goomashta*, was brother to the *Decree Nuvees* of the Court ; and the loss and inconvenience to Mr. Thomas, if the indigo were uprooted, were duly explained to the *Sherishtadar* ; and he took upon himself to add to the decree, "*after the indigo is cut*"—thereby keeping the decree-holder out of his own for eighteen months!!!

It is a good old custom for a writer, who may have ventured to appear before the public, to take leave of his indulgent readers in a formal address, and to mention the inducements that led him to "take up his pen." I accordingly thank my readers for their favourable notice of my endeavours to amuse, as well as to instruct them. I was induced to make "*An Orderly*" endeavour to expose the trickery and vice of the Courts, as the only means in my power to bring so important a matter before the public, and prominently before the authorities ; in the hope that steps would be taken to remedy the evils brought to notice. I had no personal enmity to revenge ; no personal friendship to serve ; no ambitious object to attain. If the truths I have written have the effect of remedying *one single evil* that may press heavily upon the *ryot*, in that shall be my reward. Reader, farewell ! with a low *salaam*, I say to one and all, *Khoda Hafiz*.*

PANCHKOUREE KHAN.

* God preserve you.

THE END.

Bögl



Panchkouree Khan

The Revelations of an Orderly, being an attempt to expose the abuses of
administration by the relation of every-day occurrences in the mofussil
courts By Panchkouree Khan

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